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Miss Elsie L. Syer-

With best wishes of the writer.

An it please her, with this  
thought added.

Two people may meet as strangers

Then it is as if God said again

"Let there be light."

And a new friendship is born  
into the world.

Robert Mason

The Gardner

March 23<sup>d</sup> 1889 -



# SKETCHES AND IMPRESSIONS

MUSICAL, THEATRICAL, AND SOCIAL

(1799-1885)

INCLUDING A SKETCH OF

THE PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

FROM THE AFTER-DINNER TALK

OF

THOMAS GOODWIN

MUSIC LIBRARIAN

BY

R. OSGOOD MASON, A.M., M.D.

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NEW YORK & LONDON  
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## PREFACE.

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Mr. Thomas Goodwin, well known to the musical profession in New York and other large cities throughout the country for the last half century, was born in London in 1799, and died in this city June 28, 1886. He was specially well informed in musical and dramatic affairs, and the genial manner in which he recounted his experiences and recollections made him a most agreeable companion for a leisure hour.

We were table companions for many years, and so many of the "Sketches and Impressions" which go to make up this little volume were drawn from and suggested by the pleasant talks indulged in on these

occasions that I gladly place the whole in his name and in the first person, as a token of respect, as well as appreciation of the bright intellect, cheerful spirit, and lovely social qualities of my old friend.

R. O. M.

THE CORDOVA,  
No. 170 W. 59th Street,  
*December, 1886.*



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## INTRODUCTORY.

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Of those who were born in the last century, but few now remain. As one of that small remnant, though claiming no special intimacy with distinguished people of the past, I have seen and can remember many persons who were prominent characters in the olden time, and especially amongst those who were connected with the stage or were patrons of music or the drama. It is of these persons that I would present some reminiscences.

I know the ungracious saw reminds us that "when the age is in the wit is out," and it bids us have a care; but it is also true that in old age the scenes and events of early

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life sometimes return and present themselves to the mind with marvelous distinctness.

If these sketches from scenes "the most of which I saw and a part of which I was," shall succeed in reviving some pleasant memories in the minds of those who are already on the home-stretch in the race of life, or in furnishing a mild sensation of interest for a leisure hour to some of a later generation, they will find excuse for being.

## I.

1799—Nelson's funeral—An old London newspaper.

I was born in London in 1799, when George III. was king, Napoleon was first consul, and Pitt and Talleyrand were counsellors in their respective nations. When I was six years old occurred the battle of Trafalgar with its victory, dearly bought by the death of Nelson. The funeral of the great admiral, with its pageant and procession is amongst my earliest recollections, and the scene is still clearly pictured on my mind; minutiae doubtless are lost, but the general features are distinct. I remember being taken by a relative to Ludgate Hill, where a window had

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been secured from which to view the pageant. I remember the general gloom and depression, the display of emblems of mourning, the immense surging crowd, the procession of soldiers and sailors, and especially the ponderous funeral-car with its low broad wheels and massive outline. It was covered with black, draped with English flags and standards, and decorated with naval and armorial insignia. Upon this rested the coffin covered with black cloth and ornamented with silver. The whole was drawn by magnificently caparisoned horses. Altogether it formed a spectacle likely to impress even a child.

I have in my possession a copy of the *London Times* of November 7th, 1705 — a little four-page sheet, scarcely the size of a single leaf of one of our morning papers. It contains Collingwood's dispatches, dated



off Cape Trafalgar, Oct 22d, the day after the battle, details of the fight and interesting incidents of Nelson's last moments, much as they have come down to us in history.

It also contains the following notice of Covent Garden Theatre: "Last night after the comedy of 'She would and She would not,' in which Miss Smith acted Hypolita with admirable spirit, the Proprietors of this Theatre, ever alive to the national glory, produced a hasty but elegant compliment to the memory of Lord Nelson.

"When the curtain drew up, we were surprised with the view of a superb naval scene. It consisted of columns in the foreground, decorated with medallions of Naval Heroes of Britain. In the distance a number of ships were seen, and the front of the picture was filled by Mr. Taylor and the principle singers of the

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Theatre. They were grouped in an interesting manner with their eyes turned towards the clouds from whence a half length portrait of Lord NELSON descended with the following under written: '*Horatio Nelson, Ob. 21st. Oct.*'

"Mr. Taylor and the other performers then sang 'Rule Britannia,' verse and chorus. The following additional verse written by Mr. Ashley of Bath was introduced and sung by Mr. Taylor with the most affecting expression; it was universally encored:—

" 'Again the loud-toned trump of fame  
Proclaims BRITANNIA rules the main,  
While sorrow whispers *Nelson's* name,  
And mourns the gallant victor slain.  
Rule, brave Britons, rule the main,  
Revenge the *God-like Hero* slain.' "

The following item is next in order in the same paper.

"Yesterday morning at eight

o'clock a messenger was set off with despatches to his MAGESTY at Windsor, with the joyful news of the late victory. On the messenger's arrival he made the glad tidings known. The KING'S own Militia being in the Little Park, exercising, fired a *feu de joie* on the occasion."

This old *Times* is a very quiet-looking sheet, and has less heading and fewer exclamation-points than would now be used in announcing the success of a ward politician.

## II.

First production of "The Creation" in London  
—Pantomime of "Mother Goose"—Grimaldi.

For more than fifty years my father, amongst other responsible positions connected with his profession, was music librarian to Covent Garden Theatre. He was a man of excellent taste, both musical and literary, and was himself the author of some poetry which was well esteemed in its day. I remember a *bon mot* of his in connection with the first production of the oratorio of "The Creation" in London. The copy of the oratorio, afterwards published by my brother William, has this reference to its composition and first production.

“Haydn was sixty-three years old when he undertook this great work and was employed two whole years upon it. When urged to bring it to a conclusion he replied: ‘I spend much time upon it because I intend it to last a long time.’

“In the beginning of the year 1798 the oratorio was completed, and in the following Lent was performed for the first time in Vienna. It was performed in England, in the year 1800, at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, then under the direction of Mr. Ashley, the score having been brought from Germany by a king’s messenger on Saturday, March 22d, and the oratorio was produced on the Friday following; it having been copied by the publisher’s father (and assistants) in *six days.*” Surprise being expressed at the short time taken to prepare so great a work for its production, my father remarked

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that it was not entirely unique, "for according to Scripture the whole work was done once before in the *same time*."

It was as a boy in my father's office and library, having access to every part of the theatre, that I began to become familiar with theatrical affairs and notice conspicuous persons both before and behind the scenes.

In the season of 1806-7, when I was eight years old, was first produced at Covent Garden Theatre the pantomime of "Harlequin and Mother Goose," then just composed by Thomas Dibdin. I still have the printed prompt-book in which amongst the cast of the pantomime appear the following names: *Avaro* (afterwards *Pantaloön*), Mr. L. Bologna; '*Square Bugle* (afterwards *Clown*), Mr. Grimaldi; *Colenetta* (afterwards *Columbine*), Miss Searle.

*Fairies*: Masters Benson, Goodwin, Morelli, and Searle. Afterwards in the same play I represented the diminutive postman, very smart, with boots and bell. In those primitive times the postman went around every afternoon ringing his bell and collecting the letters from the boxes in the various shop windows.

In the pantomime the opening to the letter-box was a lion's mouth; the *Clown*, Grimaldi, in his sly and thievish manner, thrusts his hand into the opening, when to his apparently great surprise and consternation, out jumps the little postman and with noisy bell chases him around the stage. The play was a great success and ran nearly a hundred nights. I remember very well Mr. Harris, the proprietor, saying to me one day, "Well, Tom, when the pantomime has had its run you shall have the boots." This was my

“first appearance on any stage,” and the principal part of my very brief and irregular dramatic career. With this short season upon the stage also commenced a sort of man and boy acquaintance with that most genial jester, Joseph Grimaldi, which continued many years. His name, even now, is a synonym for all that is provocative of mirth in expression, gesture, joke, or song. He was my senior by twenty years. Commencing his career upon the stage before he was two years old, from that time till his last performance in a premature old age, he never ceased to interest and amuse his audiences in a most remarkable degree; and his services were always eagerly sought after.

Dickens tells of his journey by chaise and four from Birmingham to London, between twelve o'clock at night after his performance at Bir-



mingham, and seven o'clock the following evening, when for a very special reason it was necessary for him to appear in London. Arriving at the theatre tired and hungry while the overture was being played, he went immediately to his dressing-room and was ready for his cue at the right moment. This was during the season of 1807-8, and I have no recollection of the occurrence, but for the following incident, in which I happened to be a participant, I can truly vouch :

Grimaldi was playing in pantomime at Sadler's Wells, and I, then a lad of sixteen, was attending to some business for my father at the same theatre. At a certain point in the evening's programme, when Grimaldi was not needed in the pantomime, he was down in the bills for a song at Covent Garden for the benefit of that very excellent and

popular actress Mrs. Henry Johnson. My duties being over I left the theatre at the same time and met Grimaldi at the stage-door. A hackney-coach was waiting for him at the "bar gate," at the top of Spa Fields, which saved a long distance down the New Road. He invited me to join him, and throwing a large cloak over his clown's dress we ran to the coach. Here we found "Cabby" lying inside his vehicle, fast asleep and hopelessly drunk. After two or three vigorous but ineffectual efforts to arouse him, Grimaldi said: "It's no use Tom. We'll run for the stand in King's Road, Grazing Lane," which we did at our very best pace. There, jumping into a hack, he shouted to the presiding genius: "Drive to the stage-door of Covent Garden Theatre as if the *devil* were after you." Arriving at the theatre Grimaldi leaped from

the carriage, rushed through the passage-way, up two flights of stone stairs, and upon the stage. They were already waiting for him. The curtain was immediately rung up, and, breathless as he was from exertion, he threw off his cloak and appearing in his clown's dress, at once commenced his famous comic song "Tippitywitchit."

" This morning very handy,  
My malady was such  
That I in my tea took brandy,  
And took a cup too much."

The brandy, of course, makes him tipsy, and he treats his uproarious audience to a scene of "gentlemanly drunkenness," if such a thing could be, such as I have never seen equalled.

In the second verse his sneezing is of the most realistic and tickling character ; and in the third his yawning is irresistible to that degree that

the whole audience yawns in sympathy and roars with laughter by turns ; altogether presenting a most remarkable instance of control over a large audience by means of the purely comic element.

Notwithstanding his fund of humor, Grimaldi occasionally during his career was the victim of mental depression, sometimes bordering upon melancholia. During one of these attacks he sought the counsel of a noted London physician who, in addition to his medical prescription, advised him to seek relaxation and amusement. "But where shall I find what you require?" said the patient. "In genial companionship," was the reply; "perhaps sometimes at the theatre;—go and see Grimaldi."

"Alas!" replied the patient, "that is of no avail to me; I *am* Grimaldi."

It was a curious comment on the inability of those who make mirth for others, always to bring happiness to themselves.

Of three generations concerning which I have knowledge, Joe Grimaldi was certainly the best and most fortunate. His son, though a fair performer in the same line of acting, had little of his father's genius for fun, little of his personal magnetism, and was poor by comparison; while Grimaldi senior, father of the celebrated Clown, was any thing but a pleasant personage. He was a dancing-master and I think something of an actor, but his chief talent, unlike that of his genial son, seemed to lie in making other people, and especially his own family, miserable. Many a fearful flogging did poor Joe, in his youth, receive at the hand of his rigorous parent. He had a special talent for doleful and funereal medi-

tations ; and disagreeable as he delighted to make himself when alive he was always jealous lest he should not be appreciated and sufficiently missed and mourned in the unlooked for event of his own demise. In order to gain some *ante mortem* evidence on this subject, Dickens relates that he feigned death, and had himself laid out in his own house, that he might listen to the remarks made, and witness the degree of sorrow manifested by his different relatives. My father, however, always told the story that he *disappeared*, and the report quickly became current that he had fallen from the cliff at Margate, and had perished in the breakers. Three or four days after, however, when his family ought to have been in their deepest sorrow, he suddenly made his appearance amongst them, and finding them apparently very comfortable under

their affliction proceeded to give them a severe scolding, and some of them a sound beating for their lack of feeling on the mournful occasion.

Grimaldi's farewell to the stage took place in 1828, one year after I left London, and his death occurred in 1837. A stanza of Hood's "Ode to Joseph Grimaldi" on his retirement from the stage indicates the esteem in which he was held.

"Joseph, farewell ! dear funny Joe !

We met with mirth—we part in pain !

For many a long, long year must go,

Ere Fun can see thy like again,—

For Nature does not keep great stores

Of perfect Clowns, that are not *Boors* !"

Apropos of the pantomime of "Mother Goose," a curious incident occurred at the burning of Covent Garden Theatre. The goose was a very light and airy affair made of basket-work covered with down and feathers. In this, little bandy-legged

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Leonard used to waddle up and down the stage in the most natural manner. While the theatre was burning the immense draught of heated air took Goosey from her perch in the property-room and drew her swiftly through the window, when with extended wings she soared aloft and sailed gracefully over the heads of the admiring crowd, away across Bow Street and Long Acre and on towards Lincoln's Inn Fields. Her subsequent history I never learned.



### III.

Covent Garden Theatre rebuilt—O. P. Row—  
Some old playbills.

Although the theatre was rebuilt and occupied the following year, there was a hitch at first and some time [was lost before the plans for the new theatre could be completed. The delay was occasioned by the difficulty in obtaining the space required for the contemplated enlargement. At the corner of Hart and Bow streets was a public house known as the "Ship Tavern," which ship also "went down" with the old theatre.

John Kemble's building committee at length managed to secure this valuable corner adjoining the old site, thus affording the architect, Mr.

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Smirke, ample space for carrying out his plans. The new theatre was completed at a cost of £250,000. I have seen it stated at £100,000 but certainly I never heard any such sum mentioned by those about the theatre who were interested and who would be likely to know. On account of this immense outlay it was thought necessary to raise the prices of admission. Accordingly they were raised from six shillings a seat to seven shillings in the boxes and from three and six-pence to four shillings in the "pit." It was from this rise in prices that the disturbance known as "the O. P. Row" originated; O. P. being short for old prices.

The theatre was opened September 18, 1809, with the tragedy of "Macbeth," to be represented by the Kembles and a distinguished cast. The first part of the play went on

without disturbance. At the end of the third act the theatres either by law or from universal custom, admitted to the remainder of the performance for half price; and that was the time the row began. The raising of the curtain on the fourth act was the signal for pandemonium: stamping, coughing, cat-calls, fish-horns, penny whistles, and every conceivable means and instrument of noise were called into use. The occupants of the pit arose and stood upon the benches, keeping time with their feet to the measured repetition of "O. P.,—O. P." Each attempt of the company to go on with the play was the signal for a fresh outbreak. Placards were exhibited setting forth their complaints or expressing insult to obnoxious persons. In the midst of the confusion John Kemble came to the front of the stage, beckoning for

silence and called out, "What want you ladies and gentlemen?" "O. P."—"O. P." was the roaring response from all parts of the house; and again the din commenced. The performance was completed in dumb show, for with the exception of now and then a short part by some favorite actress nothing was permitted to be heard. This condition of things was kept up continuously nearly three months, from September 18th to December 15th. In the meantime the affair had assumed a general interest and importance; public meetings were held and the different interests at stake were discussed, and at length a compromise was reached. The advanced prices were continued on the boxes, but to the pit old prices were restored.

During the progress of this disturbance O. P. was a slang phrase all over town. I remember standing

one day at the stage-door of Covent Garden Theatre, waiting to accompany my father home, when John Kemble passed us. He was very lame from gout, and while being helped into his carriage must have experienced an extra twinge, for from excessive pain he howled out, "Oh!" (his long, agonized Oh! in Macbeth's "Wake Duncan with your knocking, *Oh!* would thou couldst," was always considered a *capital* O!) Just then a laboring man passing the carriage bawled out in the same agonized tone: "P!" Mr. Kemble laughed heartily, and then so did the bystanders. I am aware that the word "Oh!" is not found in the usual texts, but it was used by Mr. Kemble.

Garrick declared he would give a hundred pounds to be able to pronounce the exclamation Oh! as Whitefield did.

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It was remarked as a singular circumstance that Drury Lane Theatre, the rival house to Covent Garden, was also destroyed by fire only a short time after the latter was burned and before the new theatre was reopened. Drury Lane Theatre was rebuilt at a cost of about £150,000.

I have a volume of "Play-Bills, 1808-1809, Theatre Royal, Covent Garden," whose perusal brings to mind some curious reminiscences.

The theatre opened for the season on Monday, September the 12, 1808, with the play of "Macbeth," and with a cast which included the following names :

MACBETH . . .	Mr. Kemble (John).
MACDUFF . . .	Mr. Charles Kemble.
BANQUO . . .	Mr. Murray.
LADY MACBETH .	Mrs. Siddons.

The witches were Blanchard, Emery, and Simmons.

After the tragedy came the farce, "Raising the Wind," with Mr. Lewis as *Jeremy Diddler*; the other parts by Blanchard, Simmons, Emery, Murray, Atkins, Treby, and Truman; Mrs. Davenport and Miss De Camp, afterwards Mrs. Charles Kemble and the mother of Fanny Kemble. Besides these there were in the Company Liston, Charles Ingleton, Pope, and Cook, Mrs. Dickens, Mrs. Liston, and Mrs. Gibbs. Imagine such a company appearing in New York where the public good-naturedly contents itself with one or possibly two reputed "stars," generally with the support of a wretched company.

Mr. Murray the *Banquo* in the above cast, but who, later, and within my memory, always played the part of *Duncan*, was a most excellent actor who for many years played with the two Kembles and Mrs.

Siddons. He was the grandfather of Captain Murray, the present popular commander of the favorite Guion Line Steamship, *Arizona*.

On Monday night, Sept. 19th, was presented the last play in the old Covent Garden Theatre. Some vandal has torn the playbill of that night from my volume, but the announcement on the last acting night previous, (the theatre was open only Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays) was as follows: "On Monday the play of PIZARRO. To which will be added fourth time the new Farce of 'The Portrait of Cervantes,' or 'The Plotting Lovers.'"

After the play that night, or rather on the morning of Tuesday, September 20th, the theatre was burned.


In the playbill of September 26, 1808: "The publick are respectfully informed that their Majesties' servants, late of the Theatre Royal in



Covent Garden, will recommence their Representation at the King's Theatre (Haymarket) with the Tragedy of Douglas."

On that bill also appears the following announcement :

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 "The Proprietors of the late Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, impressed with the deepest sense of obligation for the honor conferred on them by the interest which the PUBLICK took in the great misfortune that befell them last Tuesday morning, beg leave to offer their most grateful thanks for the unparalleled exertions made for their service on that calamitous occasion."

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On Wednesday, September 28th, was played "The Beggar's Opera," with Incledon as *Capt. Macheath*.

On Friday night, September 30th, "The Grecian Daughter" was represented, and followed as an after

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piece by the musical farce of "The Poor Soldier," with Incledon, Taylor, Bellamy, and others, together with Miss Bolton and Mrs. Liston. Master Goodwin's name also appears as *Phelim* the pot-boy. I still remember my short part as it was then played, which was to hand *Bagatelle's* curious challenge to *Fitzroy* after asking him if he was "the man in the red coat." As *Fitzroy* commences reading "This comes hopping,"—Exit boy, saying: "If that 's the case I 'll hop off!"

On this bill was the announcement of the play of "Macbeth" for the following Monday, with the Kembles and Mrs. Siddons. So it happens that, although never an actor by profession, my name appears upon the same bill with John and Charles Kemble, Pope, Murray, Incledon, and Farley; Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Liston, as upon other occasions,

with Grimaldi, Balogna, and Miss Searle.

This bill, as also most of the others, gave the now somewhat strange-sounding announcement, "The doors will be opened at HALF past FIVE and the Play begin at HALF past SIX.

"Vivant Rex and Regina."

#### IV.

John Kemble's Shakespearian Revivals of 1812.

In the theatrical season of 1812 John Kemble made some noted Shakespearian revivals, amongst which one of the most effective was the play of "Julius Cæsar." A description of the costumes in which Shakespearian characters had previously been represented would scarcely be believed. Garrick, who died only twenty years before I was born, and whose traditions were in full vogue in my youth, played *Brutus* in a bag-wig; and Frederick Reynolds, the dramatist, whom I as a boy have often seen and heard converse in my father's library, and who in his boyhood had seen Garrick, de-

scribes Barry, a great actor and contemporary of Garrick, as playing *Othello* "in a full suit of gold-laced scarlet, a small cocked hat, knee-breeches, and silk stockings, conspicuously displaying a pair of gouty legs. As for his wife," he goes on to say, "then in the zenith of her beauty, clad in the fascinating costume of Italy, she looked as captivating as he grotesque." The scenery and properties generally were equally conspicuous for anachronisms and absurdities. It is true that many of these absurdities had already disappeared in Kemble's time; still, in neither scenery, costumes, nor properties generally, during the early part of his career, was much attempt made at truth or accuracy; in fact, Kemble himself originally acted *Hamlet* wearing the Order of the Garter beneath his knee, with ribbon and star, black court dress, and pow-

dered hair. Kemble first appeared while Garrick was still at the height of his popularity as an interpreter of Shakespeare, and any innovation upon his methods or changes suggested in his readings were considered little better than sacrilegious, and evidence of overweening confidence and inexcusable egotism. Kemble, however, brought more knowledge and a better literary judgment to bear upon his work, and with Garrick's decline, his own more correct, if not always more sympathetic and natural style and methods began to gain popularity, and the revivals 1812 and the following years were the full development of his own ideas and studies, brought about after long and persistent effort.

It would be unjust, however, not to acknowledge the great assistance of Young, Planché, and others in bringing about this desirable change

in the accessories of the English stage.

The cast which represented the play of "Julius Cæsar" at this time was such as will probably never again be seen on any stage. John Kemble as *Brutus* ; Charles Young as *Cassius* ; Charles Kemble as *Mark Antony* ; Terry as *Casca* ; Simmons as *First Citizen*, and Mrs. Siddons as *Portia*.

The scenery was a marvel of effective architectural painting. It was the work of the celebrated scenic artist Peugh, whose whole attention was given to this special department of his art. Each scene which was represented appeared to be the very place itself. The forum, the senate-chamber, the public street, were all actually present to the spectator. The procession in the first act was a pageant of unexampled splendor. A similar one appeared in the play

of "Coriolanus," in which, Young remarks, two hundred and forty persons assisted. The military part of the spectacle was, "by permission," composed of a portion of the famous organization known as the Life Guards. They were a magnificent set of men, every one of whom was over six feet in height. Being the Life Guards they were seldom called upon for active service abroad, but rather for show occasions at home, consequently they were rather the butt for ridicule by the *gamins* and common people, and were often chaffed as "beef-eaters" and "live lumber," and on account of an unfortunate occurrence (I think it was at the commitment of Sir Francis Burdett to the Tower) in which, while in the discharge of their duty, a cobbler was killed, they were apostrophized by the crowd as "Piccadilly butchers." On special



occasions, however, they were called to the field, and three years later, at Waterloo, they gave such an account of themselves as ever after to remove the stigma of being only holiday soldiers. In a stage procession a hundred or more such men with their natural military bearing, clad in the costumes and bearing the arms and armor of Roman soldiers and the insignia of the Roman senate and people, could hardly fail to make a grand and imposing feature.

The immense stage of Covent Garden Theatre gave full scope for such a brilliant display ; and, strange as it may seem, the other portions of the play were not spoiled nor belittled by it ; the “ noble Romans ” who represented the chief characters still filled the stage and commanded the unflagging attention and interest of the vast audiences.

The revival of “ Coriolanus ” with

the same accuracy and splendor was an equally conspicuous success. I remember as a lad going upon the stage for fun with the plebeians who "threw up their greasy caps."

In the second act, when Kemble as *Coriolanus* returns from his late victory, he gave instructions to Schmidt, the little German trumpeter, to continue the trumpet flourish until he got well down to the front of the stage. At the rehearsal Kemble walked in a slow and stately manner from the back of the stage down to the footlights; but during the stately march the little trumpeter became exhausted and the flourish died out. "Sir!" said Kemble, with severe dignity, "did I not tell you to keep on blowing until I stopped?" "Yes, sir," meekly answered the breathless trumpeter, "but mine Gott! who is to find der vind?"

Little Simmons, a great actor in little parts, as one of the plebeians, was accustomed to imitate Kemble to the life, repeating to his companions *Coriolanus'* speech just spoken by him to the people :

"I thank you for your voices—thank you,  
Your most sweet voices. Now you have left  
your voices  
I have nothing further with you !"

The house was in a roar and Kemble enjoyed the fun.

Kemble's energy when once he had decided to do a thing was immense.

While the play of "Henry VIII." was in preparation he desired the chief "property man," Bradwell, to have a certain piece of stage property ready in a certain time. Bradwell demurred, saying it was impossible to prepare such a piece of work so quickly. "Impossible!" said Kemble, "I don't know the word; if it

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were necessary for the play I would have a *pickled elephant* in that time."

As a youngster I used to wonder why Kemble in the "play scene" in "Hamlet" wore one of his black silk stockings negligently down about the ankle. It showed a brave limb I knew and was of course intended to add to the strangeness of his conduct before the king and queen. I do not think it was ever imitated by any of the later players of the part.

In addition to his Shakespearian characters I have seen Kemble as *Penruddock* in "The Wheel of Fortune," *Octavio* in "The Mountaineers," *Lord Townley* in "The Provoked Husband," and also in "Blue Devils." I cannot recall any of these pieces as having been played in New York except "Blue Devils." Burton produced this piece at his

theatre in Chambers Street, playing the principal character himself, and failed.

The audience laughed to be sure, and could not imagine Burton playing any thing really serious; he, however, could not see the joke. "D—n it," said he to John Cook, who was leading the orchestra, "do they suppose I *can't* play a serious part?" Kemble in the part was *awfully* serious; he regretted he had not shot himself at the inn which he had left that morning.

As an instance of the arrangements behind the scenes in those times, in the tragedy of "Macbeth," before the "murder scene," a table was placed at the wing on the O. P. side, and upon it a looking-glass and gallipot of red paint. Persons were allowed to stand at the wings, the limit of approach being distinctly marked off by a painted line. After

the murder of Duncan I have often seen John Kemble, and afterwards also Mrs. Siddons come off the stage to the wing and smear their hands with the counterfeit blood from the gallipot ; he by the aid of the looking glass also prepared his ghastly face ; operations which I have no doubt are now remanded to greater privacy.

## V.

Charles Kemble—His *Mark Antony*—Inspector of plays—An old license.

Charles Kemble, while most excellent in certain tragic parts, had a vein of gaiety and humor which fitted him for comedy also in which he equally excelled. While great as *Macduff*, *Romeo*, or *Falconbridge*, he was equally so as *Charles Surface* or *Young Mirabel* in "The Inconstant, or Wine Works Wonders." To my mind, however, both as an oratorical display, and in the effect which it produced upon his audiences his greatest part was *Mark Antony*. At the time of his farewell to the stage in 1836, as related by Planché he was the guest at dinner of the Gar-

rick Club. Lord Francis Egerton presided on the occasion and referred especially to the effect produced upon himself by Charles Kemble's rendition of the Oration over the body of Cæsar. He said that conservative as he was he had often felt as though he could rush out into the street with the most democratic mob and help to sack the houses of the senators.

As a boy, this scene impressed me greatly, and I have often got away from the library or copying-room where I happened to be engaged, and found my way to the wings or the orchestra, to listen to it. It happened that, although a lad of twelve or thirteen years of age, I was a very imperfect reader; a natural inaptitude, together with an "intolerable deal" of "hookey," doubtless combined to bring about this unfortunate state of affairs.



About this time, together with my sister, afterwards Mrs. Loveday, two years younger than myself, I was invited to dine with a favorite relative at Lower Road, Islington. After dinner, our hostess, wishing to hear what progress we were making in our studies, proposed that we should give a sample of our reading. My sister led off, and, being an excellent reader, acquitted herself with honor, and received her merited encouragement and praise, while I stood in mortal terror of the approaching ordeal. At length, our hostess turned to me, saying : “ Now, Master Tom, since your sister has given such a good account of herself, let us see what you can do.” At the same time, she handed me the open book, which I took with a gasp of horror ; but on glancing at the page, my spirits revived ; it was *Mark Antony’s* speech, and I could repeat it word for

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word. What a relief! I promptly commenced, and, without any real reference to the text, proceeded, without the least hesitation, to the end, imitating to the best of my ability, which, in that line, was not bad, Kemble's tone and inflection. My mentor was delighted. She praised my fluency, my pronunciation, and my excellent intonation. My success was complete. It has always been a joke between myself and my sister, who, at the age of eighty-three, is still living in London, a sort of landmark of the long-ago. She is a connoisseur in theatrical matters, and still keeps up her interest in them. Her eighty-second birthday was marked by beautiful floral gifts from those popular and talented representatives of dramatic art—Mr. Irving, Miss Terry, and Mr. Toole. She saw and admired Edwin Booth in his representations at the Lyceum,

and had the pleasure of congratulating him on his well-deserved success in England. She has seen all the Desdemonas, as well as Portias and Juliets of note for a great many years past, but thinks Miss Terry the most charming of them all.

Charles Kemble, later in life, received the appointment of "Examiner of Plays." The duties consisted in reading the plays which had been accepted by the managers of the different theatres, to see that they contained nothing objectionable, either on the score of politics or morals. Those which were approved were reported to the Lord Chamberlain, who issued the license.

The following is a copy of a license, the original of which I have in my possession :

December 15, 1814.

It having been reported to me by the Examiner of all Theatrical en-

tertainments that a manuscript entitled *Harlequin Whittington*, Mayor of London, a Pantomime, in 1 act, does not contain in it any thing immoral or otherwise improper for the stage, I, the Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's household, in consideration of the same, do, by virtue of my office, and in pursuance of the Act of Parliament in that case provided, allow the said manuscript to be acted at your Theatre, according to the copy thereof delivered to me and signed by yourself, without any variation whatever, unless such variation be likewise approved by me in due form.

INGRAM HERTFORD,  
*Chamberlain.*

MR. FAWCETT,  
*Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.*

## VI.

Mrs. Siddons.

The name of Siddons, like that of Kemble, is a household word amongst all who have any interest in the dramatic affairs of the past. The younger race of theatre-goers, however may not all remember that she also was a Kemble, and the eldest of her generation of that talented family. At the age of eighteen, and after two years of opposition on the part of her parents, she was married to Mr. Siddons, an actor of great versatility but no special talent; so it occurred that her great reputation as an actress was won and enjoyed, not as Sarah Kemble, but as Mrs. Siddons. In the history of the

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English stage she was a connecting link between the old and the new. At the age of twenty-one she played with Garrick then sixty years old ; in middle life, when at the zenith of her success and popularity, as well as in later years, she shared the honors of the stage with her talented brothers John and Charles, and, although, having taken formal leave of the stage she still appeared on special occasions as late as 1817, when Macready, well-known also to New York audiences of thirty-five or forty years ago, was the rising star in London. She commenced her London career in 1775, and took leave of the stage soon after the great Shakespearian revival of 1812. I well remember her reappearance as *Lady Macbeth* for her brother Charles' benefit. The orchestra was let at a guinea a seat, and by some curious conjuration ninety seats were

occupied by the nobility and other persons of distinction' where usually forty musicians found little enough room. The band played the witches' music behind the scenes. It was a great ovation. I think her last appearance was also for her brother Charles' benefit and occurred in 1819.

Her influence over her auditors was most remarkable. There are two chief methods by which an actor influences his audience; one is by *seeming* to be filled with the passions and sentiments which he represents, the other is by so identifying himself with the character which he represents as to *really* feel those same passions and sentiments. The latter method was the one which gave Mrs. Siddons her great power. She identified herself entirely with the character which she was representing. Her tears were

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*real*; her anger, sorrow, love, exultation were genuine; simply the expression of emotions which for the moment she actually felt. Planché speaks of her *Volumnia* in the great revival of "Coriolanus," and I also well remembered her in the part. She was the exultant, joy-intoxicated mother, forgetful of all else and revelling in her son's success and triumphal honors. Once, in representing a fainting scene after a burst of intense passion, she fell back in a real swoon; the intensity of real feeling being such as to endanger her life. A curious incident is related by Doran as follows: One night as Mrs. Siddons was playing *Isabella*, (in "The Fatal Marriage") and had uttered the words by which she used to pierce all hearts, words uttered on discovering her first husband in whose absence she had remarried: "Oh, my Biron! My Biron!" a



young Aberdeenshire heiress, Miss Gorden of Gight, sent forth a scream as wild as *Isabella's*; and taking up the words in a hysterical frenzy was carried out still uttering them. Next year the impressible young lady was wooed and won by a Byron, the Honorable John of that name, by whom she became the mother of one more famous than the rest, Lord Byron, "lord of himself, that heritage of woe."

But even Mrs. Siddons was not free from unfavorable criticism, and Walpole, then an old man, considered her by no means the best actress he had seen. "We old folks," he says, "are apt to be prejudiced in favor of our first impressions; I should have thought her marvellous, but alas! I remember Mrs. Porter and the Dumesnil."

## VII.

The Opera of "Guy Mannering"—Bishop as a  
Surgical Adviser.

Terry, who, in addition to his labors as an author, was also an excellent actor, dramatized the story of "Guy Mannering," and it was produced as an opera at Covent Garden Theatre in 1816, one year after the appearance of the novel. It was presented with a most talented cast: Liston, Emery, Blanchard, Tokley, Abbot, Simmons, Sinclair, Higman, and Master Williams; Miss Stephens (Kitty Stephens), Miss Mathews, Miss Carew, Mrs. Davenport, and Mrs. Egerton. Mrs. Egerton was the *Meg Merrilies*. She was a talented actress, and her idea

and representation of the part were certainly quite unlike a later representation by Charlotte Cushman.

The opera had *only five* composers: Bishop, Whitaker, Attwood, Davy, and Thomas Cooke. Bishop was the musical director, and his five pieces were nightly encored; so also were Whitaker's two—"Rest Thee, Babe," and the duet, "Without a Companion."

Whitaker was much annoyed that Tom Cooke, the musical director at Drury Lane Theatre, was called in to compose the song, "Safely Follow Him," for Higman. Higman's voice was a wonderfully full and heavy bass, which my father used to compare to one of Picford's huge broad-wheeled eight-horse wagons, going at full gallop with heavy freight for Birmingham or Bath. When Braham took the part of *Henry Bertram* he introduced the

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song, "Scots wha hae," and the "Echo duet" from "The Americans."

The first and second acts of the opera were an immediate success; the third went very flat until the finale, which took the audience by storm. This finale was Mr. Fawcett's idea; he thought some old and popular Scotch air would be taking, and suggested "There's nae luck about the house." Terry then wrote the words as they now stand. There are three verses, solo and chorus, for the different actors; the last, for *Lucy*, is as follows:

" Then welcome back the rightful heir  
To native halls and lands,  
There's might and right and music too  
In your approving hands.

*Chorus.*

" For there's nae luck about the house,  
There's nae luck at a';  
There's little pleasure in the house  
When your smiles are awa'."

After a few nights he re-wrote the whole third act.

Sir Walter Scott was on terms of intimacy with Terry, who was also a Scotchman, and he came down to London to see how his friend had treated the weird old gipsy. I very well remember seeing him sitting in the Prince of Wales' box. He found some alterations in the story, but on the whole was well pleased with the libretto as he heard it. Altogether the opera was a magnificent success, as it deserved to be, both on its merits as a composition and from the way it was put on the stage. If it had been produced then as I have since seen it played, I am sure it would have been "guyed."

In those times Bishop was daily in our library where there was always a desk at his disposal and where he often occupied an hour by filling in some portion of a score, pre-

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paratory to drawing out the parts ; it saved time, and he was generally behindhand with his orchestral scores. While thus employed one day after rehearsal, one of Mrs. Egan's work-girls—pretty little Mary Hill—came running across from the work-room crying out : “ Oh ! Tom, Tom ! the cat 's in a fit.” She never imagined Bishop was present ; but he, to her astonishment, replied in slow and formal tone and semi-tragic air : “ *Cut her tail !* ”

I “ cut stick ” very rapidly, bursting with laughter, and Mary disappeared like a flash. Bishop threw a mischievous glance after the frightened girl and then joined in the general laugh. I think the cat must have got an inkling of the radical remedy proposed by Bishop, for when I arrived upon the scene of action she was all right, and the operation was postponed.

## VIII.

Davy the composer and Incledon the singer.

Davy and Incledon were great friends, though in decided contrast to each other in size and general characteristics. Davy, though small and very untidy, was intelligent, while Incledon, though large and always handsomely dressed, was very little of a scholar. But Davy composed good songs and Incledon sang them well. So they got on capitally together. One day they were going together to Brampton to dine at Incledon's. As they passed a book stall Incledon called his friend's attention to a gaily bound volume, saying: "Jack, that's a handsome book, and I'm sure it would just fit that nook in my book-case."

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“But, Charles,” remarked Davy, “what *is* the book?”

“Oh!” replied Incledon, “I don’t care a straw about that so long as it is handsomely bound and fits the space!”

Incledon was accustomed to have a few friends to dine with him on Sunday, and of course they enjoyed themselves with “choice spirits” and good things generally.

On one occasion, after dinner, Incledon, quite contrary to his usual custom, suggested that they should “have a real rational and improving time,—have some reading.”

Accordingly he went to his well-filled library, which he seldom used, and taking down two or three volumes of the “Newgate Calendar,” brought them in and remarked: “Now, boys, these will both amuse and instruct us.” I believe his friends decided to pursue the usual



routine of their Sunday evening devotions, regardless of the amusing and improving character of Incledon's selection.

Incledon had a very funny way when excited of making a sound half way between a stutter and an attempt to spit. It resembled the rapid pronunciation of the letter p, at the same time forcing out a little air with the tongue at each repetition. His favorite oath was quite the reverse of complimentary to his eyes. One day he was in our library chatting with several gentlemen—singers, authors, and composers—when one of the party said: "By the way, Charles, what do you intend to do with your boy?" (He was now a well-grown lad.) "Well," said Incledon, "I hardly know. I had thought of making him a singer; it has proved a very good trade to me." Some one suggested that be-

fore deciding to make him a singer it would be well to ascertain whether he had a voice. "Has a voice!" said Incledon, indignantly; "has a voice, well, p—p—p, d—n my eyes! that's the p—p—p—p best joke I've heard in a long time; as if there could be any p—p—p—p doubt that the son of Charles Incledon would have a voice!" But it turned out otherwise; Charles Incledon the younger was an excellent musician and composer, but he failed to inherit his father's voice; he never sang, at least, never in public.

Incledon himself was a truly wonderful singer. At one time a midshipman, his phenomenal voice attracted attention and was cultivated to excellent purpose. It was a robust tenor, not bass as stated by Sterling. One of his most effective efforts was a descriptive sea-song by

Stevens, called "The Storm," and commencing,

"Cease, rude Boreas, blustering railer ;  
List, ye landsmen, all to me."

In this song his perfect use of nautical language and familiarity with the scenes represented, eminently fitted him to render such scenes effective. The rising storm, the vessel in danger, the ringing word of command, the wreck, the despair, were all given with such vividness as to command the most profound silence and evoke the deepest emotions of his large audience. His action throughout was superb. He always sang this song at his own benefits, and it was always received with rapturous applause. The well-known song, "In the Bay of Biscay o' " was written for him by his friend Davy.

## IX.

Harriet Mellon—Coutts the Banker—The Duke of Devonshire—Wellington—After Waterloo.

I have very distinct and pleasant recollections of Miss Mellon, though I was but a child when she was at the height of her popularity. She was a charming woman and a favorite actress, but kindness of heart was also a prominent characteristic. She was a great favorite in the profession, and the youngsters adored her. At Christmas it was customary, as it is still, to have pantomime or some fairy spectacle for the special entertainment of the children. One time at the Lyceum Theatre, "Cinderella" was being produced. Mr. Arnold was manager, and there were

numerous "juveniles" as fairies and other diminutive supernumeraries. Miss Mellon came into the green-room amongst us with a pat or a kind word for every one she came in contact with. She chucked me under the chin and said laughingly "Do you think you could eat a nice piece of mince-pie?" Could a duck swim? thought I, but only said very modestly, "Yes, if you please." An attendant was accordingly sent to the pastry-cook's near by, and some tray-loads of goodies, not all so indigestible as "mince-pie," soon made their appearance, which she herself distributed amongst the youngsters, much to the delight of all concerned, herself included.

Coutts, the immensely wealthy banker, had with Miss Mellon a magnificent box at Covent Garden Theatre. It was a regular suite of rooms, gorgeously fitted up, and for

which they paid the liberal sum of £10,000. It was on the o. p. side, just at the left of the orchestra. I have often seen Miss Mellon there with Miss Foote, afterwards the actress, then very young, and a wonderfully pretty girl she was.

Miss Mellon and the banker were married when he was very old—past eighty I believe. After his death she became the Dutchess of St. Albans—two singular, and I believe both happy marriages. By the first she obtained an immense fortune and an old man; by the second, when she was a buxom, middle-age matron, she obtained a title, and with it, compared with herself, a very young husband. She was already too much accustomed to applause and society to be very much overcome by her new honor. “Come, Dukie,” she would say to her husband in the midst of one of the large

entertainments they were accustomed to give ;—"Come, Dukie, we are needed at the other end of the room."

One of Coutts' daughters, by his former wife, married Sir Francis Burdett, and was the mother of the present Baroness Burdett-Coutts, so well known for her kindness, liberality, and extensive charities, as well as on account of her recent marriage. Miss Mellon was her step-grandmother.

I remember the excitement which was caused by sending Sir Francis Burdett to the Tower on charge of treason. The charge was based on a pamphlet which he, as a Member of Parliament, addressed to his constituents. He was a Liberal in politics, and a great favorite with a large class of citizens. Sir Francis shut himself up in his house and resisted the arrest for two weeks, and it was

necessary to employ the militia and remove him by force. There was a collision between the soldiers and the populace, and one or two persons in the crowd were killed.

The Duke of Devonshire's box was at the right of the orchestra, opposite that of Coutts'. The duke was a large man, of fine appearance, always in full dress—breeches, silk stockings, knee- and shoe-buckles; and passing across the stage to his box, as he sometimes did in going from the green-room, or the private entrance of the theatre, he seemed a magnificent man and splendid specimen of the English nobleman.

I have often seen the Duke of Wellington in the box with him, always seated well back and partly behind the little draw-curtain, so as to be out of sight of the audience. He always seemed to avoid publicity and the applause which his presence,



when generally known, called forth. One night the new opera of "Native Land," founded on the same plot as the opera of "Tancredi," was being played. The words were by Dimond and the music by Bishop. In the finale to the second act, Miss Paton, afterwards Lady Lenox, and still later Mrs. Wood, in the part of *Clymante*, and Miss M. Tree, in male attire as *Coelio*, dance a waltz to the music of "Isabel," a popular song which at that time was going the rounds of fashionable parties and ball-rooms, as a waltz. I heard the Duke of Devonshire, who was a great society man, leaning back toward Wellington, say in his soft and lackadaisical way, which, notwithstanding his manly appearance was his manner of speaking: "Why, I declare, Bishop has introduced 'Isabel.' Bravo, Bishop!" I did not hear the Iron Duke's reply.

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After the battle of Waterloo, and while conspicuous personages connected with that memorable event were still in London, most of them were at various times visitors at the different theatres. I recollect seeing the Emperor of Russia, Count Platonoff, his famous cavalry general, and Marshall Blucher, all together behind the scenes and in the green-room. Miss Foote had commenced her career of popular favor, and seemed to be the special attraction of those royal and distinguished visitors. Whether it was that the hard fighter in the presence of beauty took precedence even of royalty, I do not know, but certainly the grim and moustached Blucher won the kiss that evening from the beautiful young actress.

Speaking of Waterloo, I have also a *London Times* of June 22, 1815, containing Wellington's dispatches

from the field, incidents of the fight, and a list of killed and wounded. It is the same little sheet as in 1805, and as regards general appearance, so similar that the two might have been issued on successive days.

The following is the

“ OFFICIAL BULLETIN.

“ Downing Street, June 22, 1815.

“ The Duke of Wellington's dispatch, dated Waterloo, the 19th June, states that on the preceding day BUONAPARTE attacked with his whole force the British line supported by a corps of Prussians; which attack, after a long and sanguinary conflict, terminated in the complete overthrow of the Enemy's Army with the loss of ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY pieces of CANNON and TWO EAGLES.

“ During the night the Prussians under Marshal Blucher, who joined

in the pursuit of the enemy, captured SIXTY GUNS and a large part of BUONAPARTE'S BAGGAGE. The allied armies continued to pursue the enemy. Two French generals were taken."

## X.

Miss Foote—"Pea-green Haynes"—Charles Farly's Benefit—"Romeo Coates"—Mrs. Gibbs—Colman.

Returning to the theatrical people of that time, Miss Foote, in addition to her personal charms, was a most delightful actress. She made her first appearance on the stage in the one-act farce "Child of Nature." Her *début* was an immediate success, and she at once became the great favorite. Her *Rosalind* played to Charles Kemble's *Orlando* was greatly admired and enjoyed; so also was her *Maria Darlington* in "A Roland for an Oliver," with Jones as *Sir Alfred Highflyer* and Fawcett as *Sir Mark Chace*.

After a long series of successes she retired from the stage with the expectation of marriage. The man of her choice was rather a noted dandy by the name of Haynes, who, from the color of his coat, carried the *soubriquet* of "Pea-green Haynes." The match for some unaccountable cause was broken off, and a law suit for breach of promise ensued. Her mother, who was a woman of considerable talent and energy, testified in the case, and it was largely owing to her very direct and remarkable testimony that the case was decided in favor of the fair plaintiff. She then reappeared in the comedy "The Belle's Stratagem" in the character of *Letitia Hardy*, to Charles Kemble's *Doricourt*, and with renewed *éclat*. She continued a great favorite with the public as long as she remained upon the stage. She finally retired and became Countess of Harrington.

Miss Foote was always on hand and foremost when fun and frolic were the order of the day. I so well remember one night after Charles Farly's benefit,—and by the way, Farly was a character and should have a word. He came up from “boy” about the theatre where his mother was char-woman, gradually making his way and educating himself as best he could, until he at length filled a most responsible and useful place. He was a popular actor and facile writer. He wrote, arranged, and superintended nearly all the pantomimes produced at Covent Garden Theatre for many years. He also wrote the melodramas of “Aladdin” and “Cherry and Fair Star,” both of which were popular and had long runs. Planché refers to him as being jealous and distrustful of his influence and advice in the matter of costumes at the time of

John Kemble's last great Shakespearian revival of 1817. He had his annual benefit with the other prominent actors and authors. On the occasion which I was about to mention there was a masquerade after the performance, and many guests from amongst the audience and elsewhere were invited to assist.

There was a supper, some music, some dancing, and a great deal of extempore fun. A play was called for, and some one proposed the "Balcony Scene" in "Romeo and Juliet." Miss Foote came forward for the *Juliet*.

There was a man about town by the name of Coates, who used to flourish in amateur theatricals, and who, on account of his frequent and peculiar representations of the unhappy lover, was known as "Romeo Coates." Macready mentions him as about the worst,



if not *the* worst amateur he had ever seen. He was a person of wealth, and had a magnificent carriage or chariot, shell-like in form, and gorgeously decorated. Large gilt game-cocks were emblazoned on harness and panel, and underneath was the motto, "While I live I'll crow." His dress was also most gorgeous and striking; and he used to appear upon the stage, and even on the street, with diamond buttons on his coat and waistcoat. So great was his vanity, that even as *Romeo dead*, he could not refrain from moving his foot to flash the magnificent diamond in his shoe-buckle. Tom Moore refers to him in one of the letters in "The Two-penny Post-bag," along with "Pea-green Haynes," Beau Brummel, and the Prince Regent :

"Come to our Fête and show again  
That pea-green coat, thou pink of men,

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Which charmed all eyes that last surveyed it,  
When B——l's self inquired, ' Who made it ?'

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Put all thy wardrobe's glories on,  
And yield, in frogs and fringe, to none  
But the great R—g—t's self alone !  
Who, by particular desire

*For that night only*, means to hire  
A dress from Romeo C——tes, Esquire.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Hail first of actors ! best of R—g—ts !  
Born for each other's fond allegiance !  
Both gay Lotharios—both good dressers—  
Of serious Farce *both* learned Professors—  
*Both* circled round, for use or show.  
With *cocks'-combs* whereso'er they go."

On this occasion he lost no time,  
but at once volunteered his services  
as *Romeo* to this agreeable *Juliet*.  
Some absurd makeshift was arranged  
for a balcony. Miss Foote entered  
gloriously into the fun ; the very  
absurdity of the *Romeo* added to the  
hilarity, and never, I think, was so  
much fun before or since extracted  
from so serious a scene. It was the  
feature of the evening.

Mrs. Gibbs was another of the charming actresses of those times. She was the original *Mary Thornbury* in the comedy of "John Bull," written by Colman the younger. Colman was afterwards inspector of plays, an office in which he was successor to Charles Kemble. During the time Colman held the office, he was specially rigorous in his exclusion of profanity from the plays which he permitted to pass for representation on the stage. He was quizzed a good deal in the newspapers of the time, for his strictness in a matter concerning which, as an author, he had never been very particular; and as an instance of his inconsistency, his play of "John Bull" was cited, where *Sir Simon*, acting in his office of justice of the peace, recognizes *Job Thornbury* as the father of *Mary*, whom his own son had wronged, and exclaims,

“Why, d—n me if it is n’t the brazier!” Fawcett, who was also stage manager at the time, was a most excellent *Job Thornbury*.

Mrs. Gibbs was one evening playing her part of *Miss Sterling* in the “Clandestine Marriage.” In the last act she sees her sister *Fanny*, of whom she is jealous, let her father’s secretary, who, unknown to the family, is already *Fanny’s* husband, into her chamber, and lock the door. *Miss Sterling* (Mrs. Gibbs), thinking she has now a sure complaint against her sister, arouses the household, and the different characters rush upon the stage in great alarm. She then accuses her sister of an intrigue, and exclaims with great earnestness to *Lord Oglevy* and other bystanders, who seem hardly to credit her story: “Why, my lord, I saw her lock the key and put the door in her pocket!” The audience shouted, and she

stared and wondered what could be the cause of their mirth at this serious part of the business; and her dazed appearance amused the audience still more. A hint was given her, and then she gave one of her glorious peals of laughter, which again, as it always did, electrified the house.

Colman was at this time residing in the "rules of the King's Bench," that is to say, near the debtors' prison, and subject to certain restrictions pertaining to a prisoner for debt who was allowed to reside outside the prison limits. It is only fair to add, however, that Colman was there, not from inability to pay the debt, but because he considered the claim unjust, and preferred to undergo the restrictions and expense of the debtors' prison rather than gratify his creditors by satisfying an unjust claim. While thus situated,

Fawcett, in his capacity of stage manager, desired some information of Colman as author of the play he was about to produce. Accordingly, he sent a messenger by the name of James Reeves to take a note and bring back a reply. Reeves, though a very modest and well-behaved individual, was exceedingly fond of his "gin and bitters." Mrs. Gibbs was at this time the guest of Colman, and did the honors of his house. James, having arrived and delivered his message, she undertook to entertain him while waiting; but conversation was not his forte. It was a very rainy day, and she offered him a glass of his favorite beverage, but James' modesty stood in his way and he declined. As the answer was some time in making its appearance she renewed the offer, but with unusual firmness he again declined. At length Colman ap-

peared with the needed reply. "Now, Mr. Reeves," said Mrs. Gibbs, "before going out again into the rain you surely should protect yourself against the weather by taking some refreshment." James, seeing this was his last chance, accepted the coveted potation. "Now, George," said she, turning to Colman, as if to excuse herself for her seeming neglect, "I have twice before offered Mr. Reeves some refreshment, and each time he has refused." "Why, Mary," he replied, "don't you know it takes *three scruples* to make a *drachm*?"

## XI.

Edmund Kean—Miss O'Neil.

No more decided and brilliant genius has ever shed lustre on the English stage than Edmund Kean. Descended through devious channels from a noble ancestry, with fair and worthless Nance Cary for his mother, and either Aaron Kean the tailor, or Edmund Kean the carpenter, for a father, narrowly escaping a birth in the street, and deserted immediately after by his mother, his life from the first was one of hardness, poverty, and neglect.

He was precocious and beautiful, and at three years of age was on the stage as a Cupid. Later some kind person gave him a brief period of



instruction ; then as dancer, tumbler, fencer, mimic, and reciter of verses in public and wayside places, he became self-sustaining, and then was claimed by his vagabond mother. Young gives a curious picture of the lad and his mother as they appeared at this period of his life. They were, it would seem, brought to his father's house on purpose to exhibit the boy's remarkable powers, especially of imitating Shakespearian characters, for the entertainment of the company, and a most remarkable and gypsy-like scene it must have been. He took a sea voyage as cabin boy ; he spouted verses in the presence of royalty, for which he received two guineas from George IV. ; he arrived at manhood stunted in growth by privation and ill usage ; he played at country theatres ; he married, "slaved, and starved." Later, he and his patient wife, too

poor to ride, went from town to town carrying their two children, the sickly Howard and the little Charles, upon their backs, until at last in February, 1814, while yet only twenty-six years old, he drew all London to Drury Lane to witness one of the greatest representations of *Shylock* that had ever been seen upon the metropolitan stage. Then followed his *Richard III.*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Iago*, and *Luke*, through a season of seventy nights, putting a balance of £170,000 in the treasury of Drury Lane Theatre, against a season of more than a hundred nights of constant loss just preceding; and all this while Covent Garden Theatre, with its splendid company, headed by John Kemble, was doing its utmost to retain its long and popular prestige. John Kemble's laurels were rudely shaken by the youthful and brilliant favorite, and as for

smaller men, they were not mentioned in comparison. With eccentricities and faults of character sufficient to have ruined the prospects, however bright, of any ordinary man, the brilliancy of his genius sufficed for a series of years to keep him an accepted and admired favorite. But at length his well-known neglect of his patient and ever faithful wife, the notoriety of the "Mrs. Alderman Cox affair," and the gradual increase of his mania for drink, lost him favor in England, as did the same causes, together with his injudicious tongue, in America. His last years in London were simply wretched, the miserable remnant of a debauched life; and on the 25th of March, 1833, he left the stage with the Moor's farewell, ending, "Othello's occupation 's gone." He was unable to finish the play, but fell upon his son Charles' shoulder, was carried

from the theatre, and, a few weeks later, died.

In the same year (1814) that Kean first astonished and delighted London with his *Shylock*, *Richard III.*, and *Othello*, at Drury Lane, another star of the first magnitude appeared at Covent Garden Theatre, in the person of Miss O'Neil. She appeared as *Juliet*, *Isabella* in "The Fatal Marriage," and *Belvidere* in "Venice Preserved"; and it was mainly through her beauty and popularity as an actress that Covent Garden was at all able to sustain itself against the powerful attractions of Kean. Mrs. Siddons had virtually retired from the stage, and it was no easy task to wear her mantle. Miss O'Neil, however, at once became her successor; and although posterity has not assigned her the same high place in the Olympus of great actors and actresses, perhaps on account of her

comparatively short career, she was, nevertheless, great. . Her delineation of the stronger passions, such as grief, horror, and despair, can hardly be forgotten by those who witnessed them ; especially in her part of *Belvidere*, as she falls upon her face and tears up the earth from the grave of her executed *Jaffier*, the effect could hardly be excelled. Often, at the close of this part of the performance, I have seen her brother bear her perfectly exhausted, and sometimes insensible, to her dressing-room.

Mrs. Siddons, though no longer a rival, could hardly bear to see a younger and more beautiful woman, however deserving, bearing off the laurels which she had so long worn unchallenged, and murmured something about the inconstancy of the public. Miss O'Neil remained only a few years upon the stage, but

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married while yet young, and retired to domestic life. Her husband was afterwards created a baronet and she became Lady Becher.

## XII.

George Frederick Cooke—Junius Brutus Booth—  
James W. Wallack, Sen.

One of the most remarkable men ever connected with the stage was George Frederick Cooke. He was the possessor of real genius and most unusual power. It was said as a compliment to Edmund Kean that the mantle of Cooke had fallen upon him. But, as has been the case with so many men of genius, "the drink" was his relentless and conquering foe. Again and again have I seen him led across from "The Feathers," a public house in Hart Street, to the door of Covent Garden Theatre to be "doctored" so that he might be able to "strut his hour

upon the stage"; and his ability to go through his part and do it well while under the influence of drink, was most remarkable. I well remember the time when he was kidnapped in Liverpool and brought to America. It was the old story. He was drinking on shipboard in the harbor; the vessel sailed and was out at sea before he could realize his situation, and willing or not he was taken to New York. Cooper, the man who brought him over, though not an American by birth, had become entirely identified with the American stage both as actor and manager. I have often seen him at the old Park Theatre, and, though considered a star, I always thought him a very bad actor. He, however, possessed some brilliant qualities as a man; he married into an excellent family, and was a well-known character in New York, even when quite an old man.



Cooke died in 1812, many years before I came to America, and his body still lies in St. Paul's Churchyard. The celebrated Dr. Francis, who was Cooke's physician here in New York while he lived, relates a curious incident concerning him after he was dead. One night "Hamlet" was to be played at the old Park Theatre. It was for somebody's benefit, and the preparations being rather hasty, it was discovered at the last moment that there was no skull for the "Graveyard Scene." A supernumerary was hastily dispatched to Dr. Francis' office to see if he could supply the deficiency. It so happened, how, I do not know, that the doctor had in his possession the skull of his old friend and patient, George Frederick Cooke, and having nothing else for the emergency, lent that to do its grim office for a single hour upon the

same stage where its former owner had so often commanded the plaudits of his admiring audiences. "Alas, poor Yorick!"

Edmund Kean, when here in 1821, had his grave properly put in order and a monument erected to his memory.

In London I have seen Cooke play *Richard III.*, *Sir Pertinax Mac-Sycophant*, *Sir Giles*, and *Shylock*, and each one justly added to his great reputation as a man of genius and a powerful actor.

In America his genius was equally recognized, and his appearance in 1810 constituted an epoch in dramatic affairs here. He always seemed to have a contempt for American audiences. "Have I not pleased the Yankee doodles?" said he, as he left the stage one night when he had been playing remarkably well, though so intoxicated that it was

considered hazardous to permit him to appear at all lest he should fall over into the orchestra. Unlike Kean, however, there was a geniality about the man which prevented his blunt speeches from giving offence, while the waspish impertinence of Kean caused a riot.

Another remarkable actor of those times was Junius Brutus Booth, father of the talented and distinguished tragedian Edwin Booth. I recollect him well as a young man at Covent Garden Theatre, first as *Silvius*, the love-sick shepherd, in "As You Like It." It was not liked at all, and he left before the season was over. It was an unfortunate selection, and a part entirely unsuited to his talent. He returned the following year, appearing as *Richard III.*, and to the surprise of everybody met with great suc-

cess. I heard Egerton one evening say to an actor near him, "Why! we have sadly mistaken this young man's talent—he is a wonderful actor!" He made a great sensation and a genuine success. There was some misunderstanding with the management at this time, which was supposed to relate to the salary of the young favorite. Whatever the trouble was it was stimulated by the Drury Lane people, who were always well pleased to entice any actor from Covent Garden who would be likely to add to the fortunes of their own house. At all events, after a few nights Booth went to Drury Lane to play with Kean, who was then at the height of his popularity. It created much excitement, but on the whole the change was not satisfactory, and after a few nights he returned to Covent Garden and performed with

marked success. He remained in London two or three seasons following this, and then went to America. His success at the old Park Theatre and elsewhere is well remembered. In his qualities as an actor he resembled Kean much more than any one who has succeeded him. His Richard III. especially was a marvellous piece of acting and was thought by many to fully equal Kean's.

James W. Wallack (Sen.) is well remembered by the last generation of theatre-goers as one of the most popular and cultivated actors ever seen on the American stage.

I remember him in London from boyhood (he was only five years my senior) as a member of the regular company at Drury Lane Theatre, where he played with Kean, and was also stage manager when Stephen Price was lessee. Price was

also at the same time lessee of the old Park Theatre, long known as "Old Drury," in New York. Wallack was one of the handsomest men both in form and feature that ever graced the stage. His personal appearance alone was sufficient to secure him an audience independent of his great talent and ability. In versatility—power artistically to represent a wide range of characters—I doubt if he has ever been equalled; and his imitations of John Kemble, Munden, Betty, Mathews, Cooke, Kean, and Incledon were all perfection in their way. Like Charles Kemble he was at home and excelled in both tragedy and comedy as well as the intermediate class of plays.

Besides the principal Shakespearian characters, his *Rolla*, *Rienzi*, *Don Cæsar de Bazan*, *Don Felix* in "The Wonder," *Dick Dashall*

in "My Aunt," and *Martin Heywood* in "The Rent Day," all displayed talents of a high order, and made him always one of the most welcome favorites both in England and America.

In 1822, while travelling from New York to Philadelphia, he was severely injured by the overturning of the stage-coach. He sustained a very serious fracture of the leg which kept him from the stage for many months, and it was fully expected that he would never be able to resume many of his most effective and favorite parts. After nearly two years he was again announced to appear at the old Park Theatre. An overwhelming audience assembled to welcome him and sympathize with him in his misfortune. He was to appear in two plays. In the first he hobbled upon the stage in the character of *Capt. Bertram*, a

decrepit old sailor, and there were audible manifestations of sorrow and pity at seeing their old favorite so dreadfully crippled. Imagine the surprise and shouts of delight when in the second piece, "My Aunt," he bounded upon the stage as *Dick Dashall* with all his accustomed grace and activity.

Mr. Wallack made New York his home after 1851 and died on Christmas day, 1864.



### XIII.

Braham and Lord Burghersh—Higman and Grimaldi are invited out—John Trebby's sister—George Pyne's over-shoes—Caught in the act—Before it was due.

Lord Burghersh, afterwards Earl of Westmoreland, was a man of considerable note in his time, especially as a patron of music and art. He had been Minister from the Court of St. James to Naples, Ambassador to Berlin, and had filled various other foreign missions calculated to add to his taste and culture in matters of art. He was especially interested in musical culture in London, and was one of the founders and chief patrons of the "Royal Academy of Music." When in London he was accustomed

to give very large and fashionable entertainments at his superb mansion in Harley Street. Besides the nobility and society people there were usually a few artists, singers, and other favorites invited.

John Braham, the singer, was on one occasion a guest at one of these entertainments, and in the course of the evening, very much to his surprise, his lordship came up and invited him to sing. Braham complied; the next morning, however, he sent his lordship a memorandum for £50 for services rendered. He received a cheque for the amount, but I never heard that he was again invited as a "guest."

Apropos of professional performances on social occasions Dickens tells a good story of Higman, the singer, and Grimaldi. They were both invited to dine at a certain clergyman's house in Bath, and ac-

cepted. They found quite a large party of gentlemen present, the host of course presiding. Immediately upon the removal of the cloth, the reverend gentleman commanded, rather than invited, Higman to sing a song. Though much surprised at the sudden demand made upon him, not wishing to appear captious or to urge seemingly frivolous excuses, he complied. The song was applauded as it deserved : and scarcely had the murmurs of approbation ceased when the host turned to Grimaldi and in the same peremptory manner demanded a song from him. He begged to decline for the present, urging, what was obviously true, that he had scarcely finished his dinner. "What, Mr. Grimaldi!" exclaimed the host, hastily, "not sing, sir! Why, sir, I asked you here to-day expressly to sing." "Indeed, sir," replied Grimaldi, "then I heartily wish you had

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said so when you invited me, in which case you would have saved me the trouble of coming here to-day and prevented my wishing you, as I now beg to do, a very uncere-  
monious *good-night*."

John Trebby was quite a noted actor at Covent Garden Theatre; a nice fellow, but sometimes rather emphatic in his manner of expressing himself. His favorite oath, like Incledon's, had reference to his visual organs, and was the reverse of complimentary. He had the most unbounded admiration for the singing of his sister, Miss Trebby, and was at all times extravagant in her praise. During Lent, oratorio was given on Wednesdays and Fridays. On the morning after one of these performances some one was speaking in high praise of Miss Stephens' artistic rendering of Handel's charming song: "O Lord God Almighty."

“Ba—a,” chimed in Trebby. “*She* sing! You should hear my sister sing ‘O Lord God Almighty’;—d—n my eyes, it’s really beautiful!”

Abbott and Duruset were very fond of practical joking, though always good-natured and harmless in their fun. George Pyne, uncle of the charming little singer, Louise Pyne, afterwards so popular here at Niblo’s, used to occupy the same dressing-room at the theatre. Pyne was a great fidget, always taking care of himself, and always in special dread of taking cold. One very wet night he placed his over-shoes before the fire, so that they might be dry and ready for use after the play, but when the time came for going home they were not to be found. “My God!” said Pyne, “what *shall* I do? I can’t go home without them on such a night; I should catch my death o’ cold.” Abbott kindly offered

to try and borrow a pair from Mr. B. It was discovered that Mr. B. was unwilling to lend them as they happened to be nearly new, but would be glad to sell them, as they were a trifle small for him. Pyne eagerly paid the price, and only discovered on reaching home that he had purchased his own over-shoes. The five shillings were returned next morning, and it was considered a fair joke on Pyne.

Old Mr. Stephens, father of Catherine — “Kitty Stephens,” — afterwards Countess of Essex (and now only a short time dead), was at one time the victim of an amusing incident. He was one evening, during the music between the acts, standing on the stage with his back in close proximity to the “act drop.” Either purposely or by mistake the prompter rang up the curtain, and while slowly rolling up, it quietly took in Mr. Stephens’ coat-tails.

Notwithstanding his struggles he was lifted clean off his feet and hung doubled up like a half-closed jack-knife, with legs and arms dangling in the air. The English broadcloth refused to give way, and his bulk prevented the curtain from going up any farther. So there he hung in full sight of the audience. There was some confusion, the curtain was rung down, and Mr. Stephens, very red in the face, was safely landed on all fours, and crawled off amid screams of laughter both before and behind the scenes. His remarks on the occasion have never been fully reported.

Little Bob Keeley was an exceedingly clever comedian, and a very great favorite. His short, plump, and funny little figure lent an air of comicality to all his acting. After having achieved both fame and fortune by his profession, he purchased

a handsome residence in St. John's Wood, where he entertained his friends with great hospitality. Amongst the tradespeople with whom he dealt was one Berry, a grocer and fruit-seller, with whom he made arrangements to pay bills at a stated time. The festivities which followed the opening of the new house made such a demand on the tradesman's stock that he became alarmed about his new customer, and instead of waiting the stipulated time, sent in his bill at the end of the second week. Keeley sent a reply accompanied by some doggerel, which, if my memory serves, was something as follows :

“ I say, here 's a mul Berry.  
You have sent in your bill Berry,  
Before it is due Berry.  
Your father, the elder Berry,  
Would not have been such a goose Berry ;  
But you need n't look black Berry,  
For I don't care a straw Berry.”



Something similar, I believe, has also been attributed to Sheridan on the occasion of his receiving a wine bill the next morning after one of his heavy suppers. Who is really responsible for the effusion I am unable to say.

## XIV.

Some queer people—Not properly dressed for a wet day—Fair play—The old Haymarket Theatre—Had written more plays than Shakespeare.

I remember some eccentric characters about Covent Garden Theatre in my boyhood. One was the gruff old treasurer. His name I have forgotten, but he was always dubbed "Old Sulky." One of his various duties was to take charge of the stationery. The prompter having need of something in that line sent a messenger for pens, ink, and three quires of paper. "I don't see how so much paper is needed in the prompter's department," says Sulky. "I don't know any thing about that,"

said the messenger ; " here is the order, and I don't see that it is any further business of mine, or yours either, for that matter, that you should always make yourself so disagreeable and rude about it." " Ah, indeed, sir!" says Sulky. " Mr. Lewis has only just left, and he also talked about teaching me manners." " Did he, indeed!" was the reply. " Then he little knew the task he undertook!" Exit messenger in haste, ducking his head just in season to escape a large ruler which went whizzing past his ear.

John Woodcock was for more than forty years connected with the orchestra of Covent Garden. He was a remarkable man in appearance, in style always affecting the old English gentleman, with knee-breeches, buckles, and shoes. His head was ornamented with pig-tail and powder, and he was as well

known to the "gentlemen and ladies of the pit" as any of the leading actors. It was understood that he was of good family, but withal he was a terrible boaster. Walking through some fashionable street with an acquaintance, he would notice a particularly handsome equipage approaching, and although the occupants were entirely unknown to him, he would take off his hat as they passed, and bow in the most approved and aristocratic manner. They, seeing such a gentlemanly person bowing to them in perfect form, supposed of course it must be some acquaintance, unrecognized at the moment, and accordingly returned the salutation. "That," he would complacently observe to his companion, "is the Countess of B—— with her daughter."

There was an actor whom I remember about the green-room, of no

special note, but who was continually begging theatre orders from his associates. He said they were for his numerous friends, whose solicitations he did not like always to refuse, but it came to be believed that he used them to keep the trades-people to whom he was indebted quiet, whenever they would accept them. Often, after the house began to fill up, and before the play commenced, he would "button-hole" some person on the stage, and leading him to the "peep" or slit in the curtain, would point out some well-dressed person in the boxes by saying, "Do you see that gentleman along with the lady in the elegant fur-trimmed cloak? Well, that is my wine merchant; nice-looking fellow, is 'nt he?" Another was his tailor, another his caterer, and so on, endeavoring to make it appear that he patronized very respectable

people. The thing became a bore, and one evening a wag took *him* to the "peep," and pointing out a very seedy-looking individual in the gallery, enquired, "Now whom do you suppose that queer fellow is?" He could not tell, indeed. "He 's a nice fellow; I should be pleased to introduce you—he is my pawn-broker!"

Reynolds, in his "Life and Times," tells a story which was told him and his father by Garrick, whom they met on the street one rainy day, and who thus gave them the hint that their dress was not "the thing" for out-of-doors on such a morning.

The story was concerning Lord Chancellor Northington. His Lordship, plainly dressed, but in white stockings, was walking through Parliament Street one rainy afternoon, when, seeing a ring upon the sidewalk, he stopped and picked it up.

It was immediately claimed by a professional ring-dropper, who, of course, was overjoyed at recovering his property, and gratefully proposed that they should adjourn to a neighboring public house and drink a bottle of wine together at his expense. His Lordship, being in the humor for a joke, acceded. They entered a private room and discussed various indifferent topics along with their wine, until presently they were joined by confederates. Hazard was proposed, when the Chancellor heard one whisper to his companion, "D—n the loaded dice; he is n't worth the trouble; pick the old flat's pockets at once." The Lord Chancellor then made himself known, but promised to let them off if they would tell him frankly why they had supposed him so enormous a flat. With all respect they immediately replied: "We beg your

Lordship's pardon, but whenever we see a gentleman in *white stockings* on a *dirty day*, we consider him a capital pigeon and pluck his feathers as we hoped to pluck your Lordship's."

The story reminds me of an eccentric character whom I have often seen in London, and who was also noted for his inappropriate dressing; in fine weather he appeared in top-boots and coarse clothing, while upon a rainy day his costume was that of the old-time gentleman, faultless in cut and freshness.

Walking through the Strand one "misty, moisty morning," in all his fine attire, he passed some scavengers who with their spoon-like shovels were scooping up the batter-like mud. Seeing this dandy and "flat," as they supposed him, one of them tilted his shovel so that the liquid mud thoroughly bespattered his ele-



gant costume. Without a word or a moment's hesitation dandy seized the offending blackguard by the collar of his coat and the slack of his trousers, lifted him off his feet, and pitched him *clean* into his well-filled cart, much to the astonishment as well as amusement of the numerous bystanders.

There was a little theatre in the Strand known as the “Sans Pareil.” Mr. Scott, the manager, was something of a character in his way. He was known as “True Blue,” and “Indigo Blue,” on account of having been the lucky inventor of some process connected with the preparation of that useful dye, by which, contrary to the usual custom of inventors, he made a fortune. He had a daughter who was a versatile young lady and was virtually manager, authoress, and principal actress of the establishment ; and in each

capacity she elicited the genuine appreciation and highest commendation of the admiring parent. She certainly had the gifts of courage and success. Speaking of her, and stroking his chin between his thumb and finger, as was "his constant custom," her father would say ; " Why, sir, my daughter's talent is most remarkable. She has written more plays than Shakespeare ; and then her acting is so excellent, and her management ; she is wonderful, sir, if she is my daughter ! " He at length sold out to Jones and Rodwell, brother of Rodwell, the composer. They made various improvements, and changed the name to the " Adelphi." They received back the whole amount of their outlay the first season by producing Pierce Egan's comedy of " Tom and Jerry," which proved an enormous success. The little theatre has passed through

many hands, but has always proved popular and successful.

I was often at the Haymarket Theatre when Poole's "Paul Pry" was first produced. It was such a talented cast; I have seen many *Pauls* in my day, but most of them seem insipid—they *pall* in fact—when I remember Liston. His pants, his hat, his stoop, his walk, and his manner of carrying the umbrella were all as inimitable as his face. The piece had an immense success; even the chairs in the orchestra were readily let every night, the occupants giving place to the band for the few minutes they were needed to accompany Madame Vestris in her song, "Cherry Ripe."

## XV.

### Bochsa and "The Deluge."

One season Bochsa had Covent Garden Theatre during Lent for oratorios. He engaged Sir George Smart for his director and promised to bring out a new oratorio, "The Deluge." The libretto was by Dibden the younger, and Bochsa was to be the composer.

Unfortunately, however, the composer allowed himself too little time for so important a work. We had several copyists constantly on hand and ready to put this "flood" in proper shape as fast as it appeared; but as there was only one composer, supplies often failed, and there was considerable danger that the ex-

pected "Deluge" would prove a fiasco. There were now only three more nights in the season, and the new oratorio was advertised for the last Friday before Passion Week, at which time all the theatres closed ; so it was now or never.

The night came and the theatre was crammed ; but in the orchestra every thing was in confusion ; some of the pieces had not even had a single rehearsal. After the band and chorus had taken their places, Sir George with Bochsa in hand came to the front of the stage to apologize and ask indulgence for any shortcomings which they feared might occur, and thus in a measure forestall criticism. Sir George with his nasal, twangy voice thus began : "Hear me for my cause, and allow me in behalf of Mr. Bochsa, who speaks but little English," — here Bochsa, Frenchman-like, shrugged

his shoulders, put his head on one side, and spreading his fingers wide out on each side, chimed in: "Oh, yeas!"—"to ask your kind"—"Oh, yeas"—"indulgence for any disarrangement or errors which may possibly occur in this evening's performance." "Oh, yeas!"

He offered several excuses for the imperfect condition of affairs, one in truth (or rather *not* in truth) being that the copyists were not ready with their work—Bochsa always chiming in, "Oh, yeas!" in the most inappropriate places possible. At length Sir George reached his climax, and the audience, by this time being in good humor, responded: "Oh, yeas!"—Oh, yeas!" in imitation of Bochsa. The twin speakers then made their bow and retired amidst vociferous applause.

The performance then commenced.

The rushing waters were cleverly

represented by the stringed instruments in unison running scales and chromatic passages with great rapidity, while the wind and percussion instruments, by an admirable admixture and occasional blending of their various qualities of sound, furnished the chaos, tumult, and confusion. Some of the solos went smoothly and were deservedly applauded. No. 4, a charming composition, was charmingly sung by Mrs., or, as Bochsa persisted in calling her, "*Marm Salmon*." In the latter part of the evening, however, the band and chorus represented a great deal more chaos and confusion than was set down in the score, and they were frequently deluged, but not with applause. I have often wondered whatever became of this very clever composition—for it really merited a longer life and a better fate.

Bochsa, notwithstanding the fail-

ure of his "Deluge," was a most talented musician and remarkable man. He was a Frenchman, and prominent amongst musicians in Paris during the imperial splendors of the first Napoleon, by whom he was said to have been particularly petted and patronized.

On his appearance in London he was strenuously opposed by the leaders in the profession, and the methods by which they showed their dislike often degenerated into personal abuse and scurrility. No doubt there was considerable of the adventurer about him, and he was not troubled with nice distinctions regarding the means which he used to accomplish his purposes; but of his musical ability there could be no question, and apart from that he was also a man of unusual power. Kieswetter used to say Napoleon should have taken him from his



music and made a statesman of him, where he could have had scope for his varied and remarkable powers. His endurance and power of accomplishment were marvellous. After teaching all day, he was accustomed to devote a large share of the night to composition. The harp was his instrument, upon which he was unrivalled as a performer, and for which his works far exceed in number and excellence those of any other composer. He was one of the main stays of the Royal Academy of Music in London, most active in its founding and most competent to advise concerning its plans and policy. Many old New Yorkers will remember him in connection with the series of most excellent concerts given by Madam Anna Bishop at Tripler Hall.

By the way, it was Madam Bishop, and not Jenny Lind, as has been

stated, who first opened that popular place of amusement. Bochsa afterwards accompanied her to Australia, where he died.

## XVI.

The Royal Academy of Music, London.

On the 5th of July, 1822, the first formal meeting was held by several gentlemen interested in the promotion and cultivation of music "amongst the English people," and in "attaining perfection in this most neglected branch of the arts." Eleven persons, mostly noblemen, were present, and Lord Burghersh then proposed his plan for an "Academy of Music."

Preliminaries had already been considered, an organization was quickly effected, and on the first of January, 1823, "The Royal Academy of Music" was ready to begin work. Examinations for admission speedily

followed, and on the 24th of March of the same year the institution was formally opened with a class of twenty-one pupils of both sexes, and instruction commenced. His Majesty, George IV., consented to become its patron, its other chief and most influential friend being the Duke of York.

Dr. Crotch was appointed the first "Principal," and with him a corps of over thirty professors, amongst whom I may mention Cramer, Greatorex, Potter, and Sir George Smart for the organ and piano-forte; Braham, Crevelli, and Vaughan for singing; Attwood and Dr. Crotch for harmony and composition; Dragonetti, Lindley, Loder, Mori, and Spagnoletti for stringed instruments; Bochsa for the harp; and Griesbach, Puzzi, and Nicholson, the great flute-player, for the wind instruments. Moscheles was after-

wards added as professor for the piano-forte. Others were appointed as instructors in the various departments, and my brother William, who now for several years had succeeded my father as librarian to the principal musical organizations in London, was appointed librarian.

The first public exhibition by the students of the Academy took place on the 25th of February, 1824, less than a year from the commencement of instruction, and proved most successful and satisfactory. Amongst the pupils who took part in this first concert was Miss Watson, known to many New York people as Mrs. Loder, an excellent instructor in music and only lately deceased. She was a sister of the late Henry Watson, well known in New York as a talented music and art critic, also as the founder and for many years editor of the *American Art Journal*.

These concerts afterwards were given once a month and became quite a feature amongst London musical entertainments.

“The Royal Academy of Music,” although under royal patronage, was not, as in France and Italy, supported by royal funds, but by subscriptions, in addition to which much money was realized by concerts, balls, and annual dinners for the benefit of the institution. Many noblemen and ladies, in addition to their subscriptions, kept up a thorough interest in these outside efforts. Notable amongst these were the Duke of Wellington, Duke of Argyll, Duke of Cambridge, and also the Duchess of Kent, mother of Queen Victoria. In July, 1825, at the recommendation of Lord Burghersh, “out students” were admitted to the advantages of academic instruction; under which privilege I became a student and re-

mained so until I left England, two years later.

December 8, 1828, occurred the first representation of opera by the pupils of the Academy, "*Il Barbiere di Siviglia*" being the work chosen for the experiment. De Begnis took the part of *Figaro*, and was the only professional connected with the representation; all the other parts and the orchestra being filled by pupils. Mr. E. Seguin was the *Basilio*, and Miss Childe, afterwards Mrs. Seguin, the *Rosina*. The press, in noticing the performance, called special attention to these two then promising pupils, prophesying for each the success which they afterwards attained and which is so well remembered by New York opera-goers of thirty-five years ago.

Amongst pupils to whom prizes were awarded by the Academy was Miss Rivière, afterwards the wife of

Bishop, the composer (later Sir Henry Bishop), and since so well known to the New York musical public as Madam Anna Bishop.

The institution has remained flourishing and useful, bearing a similar relation to music that other institutions under royal patronage do to their respective departments of science and art. Amongst the well-known musicians who there received their musical education may be mentioned Henry Charles Banister, William Sterndale Bennett, who was also a pupil of Mendelssohn and a most charming composer. He was afterwards knighted. Then there were Charles and Thomas Harper, father and son, both great trumpet players in their time; James Howell, the double bass player, who often played with Dragonetti, and who, upon the death of that great performer, succeeded him as professor in the Acad-



emy and chief double bass in the principal orchestras; Charles Lucas, pupil of Lindley and afterwards conductor of the Academy orchestra, and George Alexander Macfarren, one of the most talented musicians and charming composers of the last half century. He is one of the chief musical celebrities in London, has recently been knighted, and, as Sir George, still holds the first place in the Academy. Others might very properly be added to the list.

## XVII.

Lindley and Dragonetti—William Goodwin.

Robert Lindlëy was a most extraordinary violincello player as well as excellent musician generally. He was a bachelor, and having no family to claim his attention, the collection of valuable instruments which he possessed was looked upon by him almost in the light of children, cared for and petted in the most loving manner.

He was a simple-minded man, absorbed in his profession even to the point of abstraction, but so kindly in his nature that he was beloved by all who knew him. When away from London at festivals, concerts, and other musical occasions where

his services were required, every one seemed to consider it a part of his duty to see that Lindley was kindly cared for.

On one occasion, some sixty-five years ago, as he was on his way to the Gloucester festivals, the four-in-hand stage-coach, with its six inside and twelve outside passengers, mostly musicians with their instruments, was upset on the road. Several were hurt, but fortunately no one seriously. When the confusion had somewhat subsided and the state of affairs had been to some extent ascertained, the general inquiry was, "Where is Lindley?" and much concern was manifested at his non-appearance.

The accident occurred close by a churchyard, and one of the company thought he heard a strain of music issuing from that sequestered spot. On making search they found Lind-

ley sitting on the edge of a tombstone, examining his pet instrument, now sounding the various parts gently with his knuckles, and now trying the chords, perfectly oblivious of every thing about him. At length he noticed his companions standing around him, and smiling faintly, stammered out: "I was f-f-fearfully afraid my f-fine old 'cello was f-f-forever ruined, but that strong case s-saved it, I d-do believe."

After considerable delay, all were aboard again for Gloucester, and the festival proved a great success.

Dragonetti, as a double-bass performer, was quite as great as Lindley on the 'cello, and together they were an important feature in the orchestra of the Italian opera at His Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket. It was quite common to see a little knot of gentlemen amateurs standing close at the end of the orchestra, to watch

and listen to these two great performers. During the various recitatives of the opera, whatever difficult or elaborate embellishment Lindley struck out, Dragonetti would execute the same or a corresponding passage on the double-bass. They were like two youngsters having a frolic all to themselves, but in their case hundreds of admiring listeners were enjoying their good-natured gambols, most of them never dreaming that it was not all "down in the bill." Dragonetti's well-filled snuff-box, a huge affair, something like a soup-plate, was then passed to those about him. Willman, the great clarionette player of that time, was also a great snuff-taker; before the box came around to him he used to squeeze a coat-button so as to make a large dent in this thumb and finger, by which means he would manage to secure sufficient snuff to last him

through the act. The kindly nod and smile accompanied this good-natured by-play.

So well do I remember these little pleasantries occurring in the orchestra of the Opera House in the Haymarket more than sixty years ago! All the members have long since gone to their long home, and I trust "sleep well."

Before closing these reminiscences of the stage and of the musical profession in England, I would add a memorial word concerning one who, during life, occupied an important and responsible position with the musical public; I refer to my brother, the late William Goodwin, of London.

To his profession of music librarian he brought the acquirements of the thorough musician and diligent student, which, together with his many excellent qualities of heart, commanded general respect and esteem.

I cannot better express the estimation in which he was held by the profession, and those who knew him best, than by quoting from one of several notices which appeared at the time of his death.

*The Musical World*, London, April 22, 1876, had the following :

“ The writer cannot pass this day without recording the death of a gentleman to whom the Crystal Palace concerts, and many other musical performances in the country for half a century past, have been greatly indebted—Mr. William Goodwin, the music librarian, who died at his place of business, on April 1st, aged seventy-nine years. On that day Mr. Goodwin closed a life of incessant, honorable, and active labor, which brought him into contact with nearly every musician of eminence and every amateur of enthusiasm in the country ; and there were few out of

the great number who thus knew him, from Mendelssohn downwards, to whom he was not a valued friend as well as a most intelligent assistant. His information on all points connected with his calling was inexhaustible. His practical knowledge of music was very great, and many a piece played as the production of its ostensible author, was, if the truth were known, scored by him at the last moment, the original not being obtainable. He was one of the worthiest, most indefatigable, most conscientious, and able men ever in any way connected with music and musicians."

Apropos of his work at the various musical festivals, the following is his own version of a little incident in connection with Mendelssohn, which was published along with the bit of music which gave the incident its interest.



“ At the Birmingham Musical Festival, in 1848, Handel’s Coronation Anthem, ‘ Zadoc the Priest,’ was the final piece in the last morning’s programme, prefixed by a recitative, the words of which differed *in toto* from the original ; and this was only discovered at the last moment.

“ I was anxiously endeavoring to adapt the new words to Handel’s music, when Mendelssohn, looking over my shoulder, said : ‘ What are you doing, Goodwin ? ’ I replied : ‘ I am trying to fit these words to the original music by Handel.’ He said : ‘ Give me some paper and let me come there.’ He sat down, and the result was the annexed recitative, which was composed, copied out for the band, and performed within the space of three quarters of an hour, being sung by Mr. Charles Lockey, who, much to my regret, begged the original score from the author.”

# 140 *Sketches and Impressions.*

RECITATIVE.

VOICE &  
TRUMPET.

The Lord God Al-mighty who or-der-eth all things in

1 VIOLIN 1<sup>st</sup>  
2 VIOLIN 2<sup>nd</sup>  
3 VIOLA,

*fp*

♯ BASS,

Heaven and on Earth hath a-nointed his handmaid, to be ruler o-ver the Nations, to

*sf*

Trumps,

gladden the hearts, the hearts of his servants Let the trumpets blow Let the trumpets

*f*

blow And let all the Peo-ple re-joice, rejoice and say

*f*

SEGUE CHORUS.

God Save the Queen  
From Handel  
Ceremonial Anthem  
'Zadok the Priest'

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

## XVIII.

A long voyage—First steamships to cross the Atlantic—New York and London sixty years ago—Theatre manners—A New York dinner.

On the 24th of August, 1827, fifty-eight years and more ago, I landed in New York. The weather was characteristic, a genuine August "scorcher," giving us a spicy introduction to this phase of American climate. It is no wonder that Englishmen here lose their ruddy color in a few years; these summer heats and winter frosts and snows are something quite new to a Londoner, and so for that matter are the long and beautiful autumns, which offset so pleasantly the extremes of the other seasons.

We were sixty-eight days on the voyage from Liverpool, for this was before the time of steamships and the ocean palaces of a later day. It had indeed been scientifically demonstrated that no vessel could cross the ocean by steam, because no vessel could carry sufficient fuel for the purpose. But the factors changed, and on the 23d of April, 1838, two steamships, the "Sirius" and the "Great Western," arrived in New York, from England, the former in nineteen and the latter in fifteen days. It was St. George's day, and the commanders of the two vessels, Lieut. Roberts and Lieut. Hoskins, both of the Royal Navy, dined with the St. George Society at the Carlton House. Gen. Sandford and the Rev. Dr. Wainwright, with other New York gentlemen, were also guests. There was a great jollification.

But this was more than ten years after my arrival. When we came it was five months from the time we left London before our friends there heard a word from us ; this was probably an unusually long time, but certainly it serves to illustrate the great change which a little more than half a century has brought about. What changes indeed have occurred since that August morning, fifty-eight years ago ! improvements, one might say, in every thing, but changes certainly everywhere. Even the streets, which we still occasionally with reason grumble about, were fearful by comparison in 1827. Then pigs roamed the highways as well as the byways entirely unmo-  
lested ; and unsightly and unsavory as they seemed, they were almost the only scavengers. What wonder that cholera and yellow-fever were frequent visitors !

A New Yorker of to-day, or even twenty years ago, would scarcely recognize the New York of 1827. There was then no city to speak of above Fourteenth Street, and but very little above Eighth; the Battery was the genteel promenade. Greenwich and Bleecker streets contained the residences of wealth and taste, Harlem was a country hamlet, and the broad district between there and Twenty-third Street was for the most part a wilderness. St. John's Square, now a railroad depôt, was then a finely kept, exclusive park, accessible only to the residents about it; Washington Square was a potter's field, Union Square a sandhill, Madison Square was undivided from the surrounding fields; Central Park was still undreamed of, and its present site was the most unlovely and unkempt portion of a seemingly useless and irreclaimable wild. Gas was

not in general use, Croton water did not come in until 1842, and even the street omnibus was still of the future.

But not in young New York alone do these great changes appear. Old historic London, now passing through the last half of her second thousand years of existence, is wonderfully changed from the London of my childhood. Then there was no Thames Embankment, no beautiful and historic Trafalgar Square, no broad Victoria Park; nor had early London then sent out its huge hundred arms in every direction, embracing and gradually appropriating whole townships of out-lying territory. Sixty-five or seventy years ago, early on a bright summer Sunday morning, we "lads and lasses" used to take a stroll out of the city as far as Primrose Hill. Then it was broad fields far out of town,

quiet, still, and sweet-scented with wild-flowers and new-mown hay; now it is all built over and is a part of noisy, busy London. On the way out some of us stopped at the little way-side inn and tea-garden known as "The Load of Hay," to order breakfast for the company. And such a breakfast! of the sweetest and purest things in their season, as may be inferred by a glance at the following announcement, painted in large letters on the side of the inn: "Home-brewed Beer, Home-made Bread and Butter, Fresh Milk and Cream, also New-laid Eggs. By me, Mary Wilkinson." We had rare sport tossing the fresh hay, a privilege we were allowed by payment in advance, and on our return we breakfasted gayly at "The Load of Hay," enjoying greatly the good things made and provided "by me, Mary Wilkinson."



Quite recently "Temple Bar," one of the best-known landmarks of old London, has been removed. Through it the sovereigns of England for centuries, on state occasions, have passed into the city, not without formal parley between the heralds of royalty and the representatives of the city, and final leave granted by the Lord Mayor to pass the historic portals.

My father had seen the heads of criminals affixed to this ancient structure, and also the spy-glasses beneath, through which to view the ghastly spectacle, for hire to passers by at a penny a peep. A more modern and less cumbersome structure has now been reared to preserve the memory of the old "Temple Bar" of Sir Christopher Wren. But I am wandering back to old London again.

Returning to New York, the

change in the appearance and general character of its people is scarcely less marked than the change in its physical aspect. Then it was essentially an American city; it had Dutch and English ancestors and antecedents, and wealth and culture were found in many New York homes. The general style of manners, however, as witnessed at hotels, public assemblies, and theatres was decidedly of its own kind, and might fairly be called American. It was this more obvious phase of society here which English travellers of that time seized and somewhat ungraciously commented upon. It is true, however, that in the theatres boots were sometimes seen reposing unrebuked upon the upholstered rail in front of the boxes of the third and even the second tier; though after Mrs. Trollope's book came out this display was often met by the

observant occupants of the "pit" with the cry, "Trollope—Trollope! boots—boots!" Boots, thus becoming conspicuous as an object of observation from all parts of the house, quietly but promptly disappeared.

Tobacco-chewing, with its accompanying *spitting* and *effluvia*, bad enough even at the present day, was then a terror to the uninitiated. Norton, the trumpet-player, a very gentleman-like and particular person, used to relate his experience in a stage-coach travelling from New York to Philadelphia. He was occupying a middle seat, near the window of the coach, when a tobacco-chewer on the front seat bent forward with the evident intention of discharging the juice of the fragrant weed through the open window. Norton shrunk back to avoid what seemed to him such an imminent

danger, when the stranger, with a deprecating wave of the hand, called out as well as the overflowing condition of his mouth would permit, "Don't move, sir; don't move; I guess I ken clear ye!"

English people generally at that time entertained the strangest ideas concerning America. They imagined even the cities to be infested with Indians and wild beasts. "You are *not* going to *America*," said a young friend to me a day or two before I sailed. "Certainly I am," said I. "But Tom, are n't you afraid? I would n't go for the world; why, first you know in going around a corner you 'll meet a lion or else a horrid Indian!"

For myself, I had been in communication, in a business way, with English people already here, and was disabused of such absurdities, and yet, I must say, the change from

regular, steady-going London to the skurry and "go-as-you-please" style of doing things which prevailed here, was, after all, rather startling. A day or two after my arrival, I dined with Mr. William Taylor, a wonderfully clever musician and conductor, the father of Mary Taylor, afterwards such an immense favorite with the New York public as a singer in English opera, and who, being an American girl, was familiarly and affectionately known as "Our Mary."

He was living in Stanton Street, then a pleasant part of the town, with nice houses all surrounded by beautiful gardens. The dinner was delicious, and well served; but when the dish of boiled Indian corn, smoking hot, was placed upon the table, and people took the glistening ears in their fingers and began to eat directly from the cob, I thought it the most astonishing performance I had

ever witnessed at a dinner-table. Afterwards a water-melon—a huge affair, nearly a yard in length—made its appearance. It was cut so as to display the delicate pink pulp, garnished with rows of black shining seeds; my wonder redoubled, and my astonishment was the amusement of the company. Never had such a sight, I imagine, been seen in London. Even pine-apples, now so common since steam navigation, were in those days often sold for a guinea each.

## XIX.

Early drama and early music in New York—St. Cecilia Society—The Euterpean—A Philharmonic—The Concordia—Sacred Music Society—American Musical Institute—The New York Harmonic Society.

The great influx of foreigners of every name and degree, which, together with its abundant and swift communication with every part of the world, has now made New York a great cosmopolitan city, has all, or chiefly, taken place in the last half century. But previous to this, and notwithstanding the cropping out of some ungraceful peculiarities, many excellent institutions existed, and good music, good acting, and a variety of good, valuable, and artistic things were known and thoroughly

enjoyed by the people of New York. The drama had already been an institution in America for more than seventy-five years; "Richard III." having been represented by a regular theatrical company in 1750, and a regular theatre was opened in New York in 1761. Between 1810 and 1825 George Frederick Cooke, Edmund Kean, and Charles Incledon, a trio of most remarkable representatives of dramatic and lyric art, had been seen and heard here and heartily appreciated. The "Garcia Opera Troupe," one of the best that has ever appeared here, and of which the renowned Malibran was a member, occupied the old Park Theatre in 1826, drawing crowded and appreciative audiences, and in 1827 Malibran was still singing in "The Barber of Seville" and other English operas at the old Bowery at a salary of \$500 a night; from all of which it



may be imagined that New York audiences of fifty or sixty years ago were at least not entire strangers to good singing and good acting.

The style of music which has of late been cultivated here, would not then perhaps have been understood, and consequently not appreciated ; but the same could have been said of London and Paris, and even of Vienna and Berlin, at the same period. The change from melody and accompaniment and the simpler orchestral harmonies of the Italian school, to the broad, full, and complicated harmonies of Wagner and Liszt, had not then been inaugurated.

London musicians and London audiences were as little prepared for *Tannhäuser* when it appeared there, as were New York audiences when it was first heard here. The symphonies of Beethoven had never been fairly rendered by an orchestra

in New York; but then they troubled the Philharmonic Society of London when they first appeared there. In Germany even they were not at first appreciated, and for years it was no uncommon thing to see the state-ly conservatives in musical affairs scornfully leaving the auditorium whenever Beethoven was played,—and they thought it was the proper thing to do.

The musical society which claims the highest antiquity of any in New York, and which is certainly amongst the earliest in the country, was the “St. Cecilia Society.” It was organized in 1791. There is a vignette of the society in the possession of Mr. Samuel Johnson, one of the original Philharmonic members, a connoisseur in curiosities relating to musical affairs, and, so far as he knows, it is unique. The list of original officers is as follows:

David Michellon, *President.*

Lewis Ogden, *Vice-President.*

James Van Vleck, *Secretary.*

The same officers continued until 1795, when Lewis Ogden became president. The society is named in the city directory until 1797.

The Euterpean, an amateur orchestra, was already an old organization half a century ago. It had been well managed, and owned a small library and several valuable instruments. Richard Pell and Dr. Quin were excellent violinists; Bocock, an excellent performer, as well as a talented musician and teacher, was principal violincellist; Pierson, the double-bass player, was a pianoforte maker of some repute, and sent specimens of his work to London to the first Crystal Palace Exhibition and World's Fair in 1851. Wiese played the oboe; there was no bassoon; horns and trumpets were only

fair. Wm. Plain, "Neighbor Plain," as he was familiarly called, played the trombone, and William Wood the drums. The annual concert and supper were given at the ball-room of the old "City Hotel," near Trinity Church. A few "professionals" were engaged for the occasion, and the members with their wives and daughters and their numerous friends made up a large and appreciative audience. After the concert the meeting was transformed into a social gathering and ball. The programme of January 27, 1826, has the following notice: "No gentleman will be permitted to wear his hat in the room during the evening, or dance in his boots. . . . Standing on the seats is strictly prohibited."

This excellent organization did very good work in its day, and, in addition to more popular performances, overtures and other classical

music were done in a very creditable, if not altogether artistic, manner.

New and young members were, of course, added from time to time, and with the new element came discord where harmony had so long reigned, and this worthy old society went to pieces. I have a programme of its 48th anniversary concert, given January 21, 1847, which would carry its organization back to the last century.

There was also an early Philharmonic Society, which gave its first concert December 16, 1824. Its work was chiefly orchestral, and the instruments used were purchased in Europe for the special use of the society. A list of the directors for the first year is as follows :

Wright Post, *President.*

Edmund A. Laight, *1st Vice-Pres.*

Joseph G. Swift, *2d Vice-Pres.*

John Delafield, *Treasurer.*

James I. Jones, *Secretary.*

The names of many New York men, prominent both in business and society sixty years ago, appear in the list of its "governors," and its concerts brought out the élite of the town. The organization, however, was not of very long duration.

The Concordia, though at first simply an amateur singing society, soon added the cultivation of orchestral music, which eventually became a leading feature at its concerts. It was composed mostly of Germans, and with the professional performers who were secured for its concerts it sometimes presented as good orchestral music as was then to be heard in the city. It was in this society that Jacoby, afterwards one of the original members of the Philharmonic Society, first, in this country, played the four-stringed double-bass. It was a great curiosity, and drew numbers of people to witness it.

Another excellent institution of the same period was the "Sacred Music Society." It embraced a large membership of both sexes, and the oratorios were given in very creditable style in the old Broadway Tabernacle, in Broadway near Leonard Street, where the late Rev. Dr. Joseph P. Thompson organized the present Broadway Tabernacle Church. U. C. Hill conducted, and Mr. Wyman, now lately deceased, was for many years its president. During the later years of his life he was actively connected with the management of the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Mr. Wm. P. Disosway, an old New Yorker still living, I believe, was a prominent member and at one time its president. His stentorian voice will be remembered by all who recollect the society.

Another president of the society was Mr. Henry Meiggs, since noted

as financier and contractor in California, and later as contractor for the great "Railway over the Andes," so graphically described and illustrated in the August number of *Scribner's Monthly*, 1877, under the title "A Railroad in the Clouds." It is one of the most wonderful pieces of railroad engineering yet accomplished.

When the old "Sacred Music Society" went to pieces, Meiggs, out of the remnants, together with much new material, organized the "American Musical Institute." Meiggs and George Loder were the conductors, and oratorios were then given on a scale never before attempted in New York. Meiggs left for California about 1850, and the "Institute" languished. It was succeeded, the following year, by the "New York Harmonic Society," which was organized and managed by Mr. Archi-



bald Johnson and others with great success. Oratorios were again given with *éclat*. The "Messiah" was given with Jenny Lind and a chorus of four hundred voices. It was conducted by Benedict, and drew an \$8,000 house. Catherine Hayes also sang for this organization with very flattering results. Later still Maria Brainerd and Mrs. Jameson were soloists, and the versatile Julien conducted.

## XX.

The Philharmonic Society of New York.

Two events of interest in the history of New York occurred in the year 1842. One was long expected, widely known, and grandly celebrated ; it was the introduction of the beautiful Croton water into the city, by which a pure and sure supply of the needful element was secured to take the place of the unwholesome and uncertain sources previously relied upon. The other was unheralded and unsung, but scarcely less important in its way ; it was the organization of a society which has proved a never-failing source of wholesome influence to the music-loving public of a great city and of

grateful supply to a long-felt need. Previous to that date several of the various societies already mentioned, especially the Euterpean and Concordia, together with a most excellent stringed quartette, composed of Hill, Derwort, Hegelund, and Boucher, had exerted more or less influence upon the general musical intelligence and taste. Perhaps the vocal societies should be credited with an influence fully as extensive if not as highly educating.

The organization, however, which has undoubtedly exercised a greater influence than any other upon the musical culture of the people of New York is its *Philharmonic Society*. Like many other institutions which have flourished beyond the expectations of their founders, the record of its beginnings is meagre. A few of its founders and original members are still living, and although their

recollections upon minor points may differ, the main facts are well established.

In the month of June, 1839, occurred the death of Daniel Schlesinger, a well-known musician, who had been an active member and most efficient leader of the Concordia. He was a most excellent pianist, and presented the New York public with a style of music much in advance of that to which it had been accustomed to listen. As a teacher and as a man he was highly esteemed, and certainly was one of the most talented musicians then in New York. Soon after his death it was proposed to arrange a benefit performance for the assistance of his widow, and also as a testimonial of respect to the dead musician. U. C. Hill, who was at that time president of the Sacred Music Society, Charles E. Horn, a popular singer

and composer, Scharfenberg and Timm, the pianists, and other prominent musicians, were among the promoters of the scheme, and it was desired that the members of the profession generally, as far as possible, should participate in it. There was at this time considerable musical talent in New York—German, Italian, and French, as well as American—well able to play the works of Beethoven and other classical composers, but it was for the most part in an unorganized and inharmonious condition, with but little inclination to unite or even temporarily to play together under any one leader. The proposed concert, however, was a matter of general interest among musicians, and it proved a bond of union more lasting than they knew. The performance (known as a “Musical Solemnity”) was to be given in the old

Broadway Tabernacle, the largest available place in the city, on the 25th of June, 1839. Many who would gladly have assisted were kept away by other engagements, and there could be but one rehearsal. Notwithstanding these unfavorable conditions, there was a more general gathering of the musicians of New York than had before united in any one performance. The concert commenced with an overture in manuscript by Schlesinger. Scharfenberg played a piano solo and Mme. Caradori Allan sang. But the chief event of the evening was the performance of the overture of "Der Freischütz" by the orchestra. It was beautifully rendered for those days, though far from fulfilling the requirements of the present time, and, to the astonishment of the performers themselves, was the best appreciated and most applauded portion of the programme.

Says one who was present: "It produced a marvellous effect. At its close there was perfect silence for a few seconds, and then the building fairly shook with the applause of the great audience, and in answer to the continued demand the piece was repeated. No such orchestra had ever before been heard in New York, and no such effect ever before produced."

The performance was a success in various ways. It was listened to with pleasure by two thousand people, and resulted in a substantial benefit of more than \$3,000 to the family for which the benevolent enterprise was arranged; and, what is germane to our present subject, it demonstrated the fact that classical and even difficult music could be performed by a large number of New York musicians from various organizations, without frequent re-

hearsals. This fact was then for the first time fully realized, and was the subject of mutual congratulation.

Some time after this concert, several of those who had been leading performers in it, happening to meet after their evening engagements were over, walked down Broadway together, and entered a public house in Park Row, known as "The Shakespeare." It was a famous restaurant in those days, kept by one Windust and his wife, most excellent caterers, both of whom had been with William Niblo in his well-known "Bank Coffee-House," in Pine Street. "The Shakespeare" displayed the motto, "Nunquam non paratus," and few *bons vivants* in New York at that time had not tested the truth of the somewhat boastful inscription.

Among the musicians present on that occasion were Hill, Horn, Scharf-



enberg, Dodworth, Timm, Rosier, Otto, Reiff, Sr., Boucher, and doubtless others; and it was here, amidst general congratulatory conversation about the concert which had recently taken place, that the first suggestions pointing to a society like the Philharmonic were publicly made and discussed.

Several "claimants" for the "original suggestion" appear, as might naturally occur where the conversation was general. The principal talkers on the occasion appear to have been Hill, Horn, Boucher, and Reiff, Sr., and, according to the best recollections of some of those present, U. C. Hill was the person who turned the attention of those present to the subject; and in view of the success which they had recently enjoyed, he then proposed the organization of a large and permanent society from the best orchestral per-

formers who could be interested in the matter, and which should have for its object the study and rendering of symphonies, overtures, and other classical music, in such a manner as to cultivate a more general knowledge and a more correct public taste.

The suggestion was well received by those present, and a meeting was arranged for further consultation. This meeting was held as proposed at the house of U. C. Hill. It was small in numbers, probably not more than ten persons being present, and composed mostly of those who had been present at "The Shakespeare." Hill was chosen chairman and Rosier secretary, and this, although entirely preliminary in character, was the first organized meeting—the egg, so to speak, from which, after patient incubation and much care, the Philharmonic Society was

hatched and reared. A committee was then appointed to devise plans and secure the attendance of those likely to become members at a general meeting for permanent organization at some future time. Considerable difficulty was at first experienced in bringing the best musicians to interest themselves in the enterprise, many looking upon the whole business as chimerical and bound to come to grief; so the meeting for permanent organization was for various reasons again and again postponed. A sufficient number, however, were found for the purpose, and at length a general meeting was held at the Apollo Rooms, on the 2d of April, 1842. At this meeting A. P. Heinrich—Father Heinrich, as he was called, a most eccentric musical genius—was chosen chairman. Thirty-seven members were enrolled, and a com-

mittee was appointed to draft a constitution, which was adopted on the 23d of the same month. Officers were then chosen, and "The Philharmonic Society of New York" was fully organized and started upon its course. The constitution declared the object of the society to be "the advancement of instrumental music."

The following was the first board of officers, chosen April 23, 1842 :

U. C. Hill, *President.*

A. Reiff, Sr., *Vice-President.*

F. W. Rosier, *Secretary.*

Allan Dodworth, *Treasurer.*

Wm. Wood, *Librarian.*

Boucher and Otto were afterward appointed assistants.

The society immediately went into active rehearsal under the leadership of its president, and on the 7th of December, 1842, the first public concert was given at Apollo Hall.

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The following was the programme :

### PART I.

Grand Symphony in C-minor . . . Beethoven.  
Conducted by U. C. Hill.

Scena from "Oberon" . . . . . Weber.  
Madame Otto.

Quintet in D-minor . . . . . Hummel.  
Piano-forte, violin, viola, violoncello, and double  
bass.

Scharfenberg, Hill, Derwort, Boucher, and  
Rosier.

### PART II.

Overture to "Oberon" . . . . . Weber.  
Conducted by Mr. Etienne.

Duet from the opera of "Armida" . . . . . Rossini.  
Madame Otto and Mr. C. E. Horn.

Scena from the opera of "Fidelio," Beethoven.  
Mr. C. E. Horn.

Aria Bravura from "Belmonte Con-  
stantia" . . . . . Mozart.  
Madame Otto.

New Overture in D . . . . . Kalliwoda.  
Conducted by Mr. Timm.

The orchestra during the vocal music directed  
by H. C. Timm.

Two more concerts were given the  
same season, and were conducted by

Hill, Alpers, Boucher, and Loder. Among the composers whose names appear upon the programmes of these concerts are Beethoven, Rossini, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Weber, Bellini, Romberg, Hummel, and Spohr.

The success of these concerts was all that the originators of the society could have reasonably expected. Without scenic aids, without action or the interest of plot or story told in words, but simply by the fascination exerted by the well interpreted works of the old masters, they brought together the lovers of music, even those to whom the higher styles of music were new, in sufficient numbers, and aroused sufficient interest to stamp them at once as the right thing at the right time.

During the second season four concerts were given and the interest

was fully maintained. Beethoven's Seventh Symphony and Mozart's overture to the "Magic Flute," together with Signora Castellan as vocal soloist, were the chief attractions of the first concert, and it was directed by the president, Mr. U. C. Hill. The others were equally attractive and were directed respectively by Mr. D. G. Etienne, Mr. Geo. Loder, and Mr. William Alpers. M. Henry Vieuxtemps was the soloist at the last concert of the season.

A single programme in each of the two following seasons is as follows :

FIRST CONCERT—THIRD SEASON,  
NOV. 16, 1844.

PART I.

Symphony No. 8 in F (first time in  
America) . . . . . Beethoven.  
Duetto, " Quanto Amore " del  
Elixir d'Amore . . . . . Donizetti.  
Signora Amalia Ricci and Signor Sanquirico.

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### PART II.

Descriptive Overture, The Hebrides, Fingal's Cave (first time in America) . . . . . Mendelssohn.  
Aria Buffa, "Conveniensi Teatrale."

Signor Sanquirico.

Cavatina Belisario . . . . . Donizetti.  
Signora Amalia Ricci.

War Jubilee Overture (first time in America) . . . . . Lindpaintner.  
Director, Mr. Geo. Loder.

### THIRD CONCERT—FOURTH SEASON, MARCH 7, 1846.

#### PART I.

Symphony No. 1 (first time in America) . . . . . Kalliwoda.  
Aria, "Ave Maria" . . . . . Cherubini.  
Miss Julia Northall.

#### PART II.

Overture to Euryanthe . . . . . Weber.  
Cavatina, Nell opera Tancred . . . . . Rossini.  
Miss Julia Northall.  
Andante, from Jupiter Symphony  
No. 6 . . . . . Mozart.  
Fifth Concerto in A flat, op. 52,  
flute . . . . . Furstenau.  
Mr. J. A. Kyle.  
Grand Overture des Francs Juges  
(first time) . . . . . Berlioz.  
Director, Mr. A Boucher.



This may suffice to give some idea of the character of the Philharmonic concerts in its early years, and the same general character was maintained during the first decade of its existence.

Before attempting to sketch the continuation of the society's work, some notice of the men who were prominently identified with its interests in those early times is only just. During its first twenty-five years the society had only four different presiding officers.

U. C. Hill, the first president, continued in office five consecutive seasons, and was succeeded in 1847 by Henry C. Timm, who held the office until 1863.

Hill was of American parentage, and was born in New York in 1802. If not of the first rank in musical knowledge and technical skill, he was at least a musician of excellent

powers, and was endowed with that direct and enthusiastic nature, as well as executive talent, which are so necessary to the success of any new or doubtful enterprise. He studied the violin with Spohr in Germany, was one of the most active men in the organization of the Philharmonic Society, was its first president, and frequently conducted its concerts.

Financial reverses and his involuntary retirement, on account of age, from the society with which he had been so long and closely identified, brought on a despondent condition of mind, which ended in suicide in 1875.

"Yankee Hill," the comedian, was his brother. They were both men of unusual talent, and contributed in no small degree to the education and amusement of New Yorkers forty years ago.

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Timm was born in Hamburg in 1811, and received his musical education in Germany. He came to New York in 1835, and soon became a popular piano-forte teacher, organist, conductor of various chorus societies, and a successful leader of the German opera. He was a most talented musician, always reliable, and always equal to the emergency. When Nagle, the violinist, came to this country, some thirty years ago, he expected to find an orchestra ready to accompany him, but being disappointed, his concert was about to prove a failure, when Timm came forward, and, without previous examination of the music, played the accompaniments from the orchestral score—there being no piano-forte arrangement,—and in a manner to give great satisfaction. Mr. Timm has been heard in the concert-room within the last two years, and while

the younger portion of the audience, accustomed only to the wonderful performances which have been listened to during the last ten years, was surprised at the applause which greeted the old pianist, the elder portion was delighted to honor the talented representative musician of thirty years ago.

The same kindly spirit has within the same time welcomed the singing of the late Mme. Anna Bishop, who, in the days of her triumph, along with Colson, d'Angri, La Grange, and Mme. Parepa-Rosa, brightened the Philharmonic concerts with her wonderful vocalization.

Timm was one of the founders of the Philharmonic Society, its president for sixteen years, frequently its conductor, and was soloist at eleven of its concerts.

He was succeeded in office by Mr. William Scharfenberg, who has been

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known to the New York public for the past forty-six years. He was born in Germany, where his musical education was received with Spohr as his personal friend and adviser. He came to New York in 1838, since which time he has been before the public as teacher and piano-forte soloist. At one time the senior member of the firm of Scharfenberg & Luis, he was a leading music publisher and importer. He was one of the original members of the Philharmonic Society, always devoted to its interests, and was its president during three and a half seasons. He was also piano-forte soloist at several of its concerts. On account of temporary absence from the city he resigned his position in December, 1866.

The office of president of the society for the unexpired portion of the twenty-fifth season was filled by

the vice-president, Mr. George F. Bristow, who had also been an active member since the beginning of its second year. He is an American by birth, and is one of the very few successful composers for the orchestra which this country has produced. His compositions, vocal as well as instrumental, have been numerous and of decided merit. His works have on several occasions been rendered by the society at its regular concerts, and his opera of "Rip Van Winkle" was received with decided favor by the New York public in 1855.

In 1867 the society for the first time sought a presiding officer outside the list of its own members, and elected for its fifth president Dr. R. Ogden Doremus, the eminent professor of chemistry, a gentleman well known for his hearty interest in musical affairs, being himself an

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amateur of enthusiasm and a connoisseur of excellent taste.

The conductorship of the society for the first twenty-five years was shared by eleven different persons. Besides the two presidents, Hill and Timm, the favorite conductors during the early years were George Loder, A. Boucher, and D. G. Etienne, the famous pianist, all of whom were musicians of unusual talent. W. Alpers and L. Wegers also occasionally wielded the baton. At one of the concerts of the fifth season, *Concert Overture*, opus 3, by George F. Bristow, was performed by the society and conducted by the composer.

The third concert of the seventh season—March, 1849—was conducted by a new man in the society, but one whose services were destined to be of unusual value; this was Mr. Theodore Eisfeld. He was born in

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Germany in 1816, received a thorough musical education there under Karl Müller and Reissinger, and came to New York in 1848. His unusual abilities were quickly recognized, and, having become a member of the Philharmonic Society, he was chosen the following year to conduct, one of its concerts. From that time, although for various reasons Loder, Hill, Timm, and on one occasion Max Maretzek, of operatic renown, conducted single concerts, Eisfeld came to be looked upon during the following five years as the conductor *par excellence*. In addition to his Philharmonic work he was conductor of the Harmonic Society, and also the organizer and leader of a most excellent series of quartet soirées.

Musical people and many others also of that time will remember the interest which was excited by his escape from the burning steamer



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“Austria” in 1858, being rescued exhausted and insensible, after many hours’ exposure in the water in mid-ocean, and also the rousing reception which was accorded him on his return to the conductor’s desk at a “grand welcome concert” on the evening of April 9, 1859.

At the last concert of the thirteenth season, April, 1855, Mr. Carl Bergmann first appeared in the society as conductor, and from this time on until the resignation of Mr. Eisfeld, in 1864, eight full seasons, the concerts of the society were under the direction of one or the other of these two able conductors—sometimes each one having the direction for a whole year, and sometimes alternating with each other at the different concerts of the same season.

Bergmann was born in Germany in 1821, where he obtained a thor-

ough musical education in theory and composition, and also became proficient as a performer on the piano-forte and several instruments of the orchestra. He came to America in 1850. Here he became conductor of the famous Germania Orchestra, and his talent as a musician and skill as a conductor were generally recognized and admired. He was an enthusiastic admirer of the modern German school of music, and as early as 1853 he was conducting orchestral concerts at which the overtures to "Rienzi," "Tannhäuser," and "Lohengrin" were introduced, and also selections from those operas.

In 1857 the opera of "Tannhäuser," for the first time in America, was beautifully produced at the old Stadt Theatre, under his leadership. As conductor of the Philharmonic concerts, his labors in the same direction were conspicuous.

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The work of the Philharmonic Society during these twenty-five years may be divided into two distinct periods—first, the period in which the works of the old composers were still new and of fresh interest to the New York public ; and second, the period in which the works of the modern composers began to be freely introduced.

In order to comprehend fully the work which the society actually accomplished, it must be remembered that previous to 1842, when the Philharmonic Society was formed, there had never been in New York a full orchestra, regularly organized and kept up by regular practice. Fairly full orchestras had occasionally been heard ; they were not, however, permanent organizations, but were only collected for an occasion. They had no regular and systematic drill under efficient leaders,

and they performed without frequent rehearsals, consequently their work was always rough and imperfect. Classical music was seldom attempted; portions of symphonies by Haydn and Mozart were occasionally played at concerts, but a complete symphony of Beethoven's had never been performed in New York.

An extract from a letter written by Mr. George T. Strong, the sixth president of the society, in reply to a notification of his election in May, 1870, is in point. He says: "To your society I owe my introduction to the greatest works of musical *art* and the first revelation that ever dawned upon me of the supernatural power latent in the orchestra—the orchestra of Mozart, Beethoven, and Weber! The society's first concert in December, 1842, and the concerts which followed it in the next four

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years, I shall never forget. Each was to me a great event."

The initiatory work of the Philharmonic Society has been sketched. Classical music formed the staple of the earliest programmes, and the symphonies of Beethoven were frequently presented. During the first eight years his symphonies were given seventeen times, and the overture to "Egmont" once. To some extent, therefore, even at this period, his works had come to be understood and enjoyed by the patrons of the society, and, as a matter of fact, by the end of the first decade they were the most popular compositions that the society was in the habit of presenting.

This simple statement indicates what the society had accomplished in the way of presenting classical music and the influence it exerted, even thus early, in elevating the standard of musical taste.

A no less difficult, and, as is now generally conceded, a no less important and useful work was still before it, namely, that of acquainting the musical public with the works of the modern, and especially the modern German, composers; and this was the work to which the society, under the able leadership of Eisfeld and Bergmann, now committed itself.

Of what we may now term the new or modern school of music, especially of orchestral music, the chief exponents were then Berlioz, born in 1803; Schumann, in 1810; Liszt, 1811, and Wagner, 1813. After Beethoven, Berlioz was the first to perceive the great power of expression which was lying latent in the orchestra, a power not only of expressing sentiment, but of conveying definite and intelligible ideas. To develop this power and accom-

plish the new work thus placed upon the orchestra, its number was increased and new instruments were added. The brass and percussion instruments were brought into more prominent use, the stereotyped form of the symphony was less rigidly adhered to, form was made subservient to the succession of ideas to be expressed, and a much wider and more complicated range of harmonies was introduced, altogether producing effects which greatly startled and angered the conservatives and all those who, being indissolubly wedded to forms and precedents, deprecated change, despised novelty, and considered innovations upon the work of the older composers as almost sacrilegious. Berlioz was the first to indicate these innovations and in part to realize them—so much so that he has been styled the emancipator of the orchestra.

He was a Frenchman by birth, but France, with all her radical sentiment, ignored him ; and his countrymen, though they honored his talent while a student, could see nothing desirable in him as a master, and they entirely failed to understand him. It was in Germany that he first met with any general acceptance or any kindly or appreciative criticism. At St. Petersburg also he was a welcome guest and favorite maestro. Liszt took up his work with loving recognition ; Wagner was mostly concerned with the work of Richard Wagner.

It is, however, but ordinary justice to credit Berlioz with the first important steps in the direction which has been so successfully travelled by Schumann, Liszt, Brahms, Rubinstein, Raff and others, and which by the genius and perseverance of Wagner and his interpreters has now



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been made a beautiful highway, to be travelled with enjoyment, if not always with ease, by all true lovers of art as expressed in music and the drama. In March, 1846, the overture to "Francs-Juges," Berlioz's first attempt at dramatic composition, and of which this overture alone remains, was produced by the Philharmonic Society, and was conducted by Boucher. In November of the same year the overture to "King Lear," by the same author, was brought out and conducted by George Loder. These were the first attempts to interpret this class of music in New York, and the works then presented have been considered of sufficient interest to merit a place upon the programmes of the society many times since, and even up to the present time.

In 1853 Symphony No. 1 of Schumann was given and was conducted

by Eisfeld. With the same conductor Symphony No. 2 was given the following year; in 1857 "Manfred," and in 1858 "Scherzo and Finale," all by the same composer, and in 1859 his Symphony No. 4 was given, with Carl Bergmann conducting.

In 1855 Wagner's overture to "Tannhäuser" was given by the Philharmonic under the direction of Carl Bergmann. It had been previously given by the same conductor and an orchestra composed chiefly of members of the Philharmonic Society at the New York Crystal Palace, and was among the first performances of this overture, if not the first, out of Germany.

Overture to "Faust" was given in 1857, with Eisfeld conducting. Then followed "Rienzi," "Flying Dutchman," Introduction to "Lohengrin" and other works, all or

nearly all conducted by Bergmann. Liszt's "Poeme Symphonique," *Les Preludes*, was given in 1859, "Tasso" in 1860, and other works by all those composers and others of the new school followed in rapid succession during successive seasons, so that during the years between 1850 and 1867 the works of Berlioz were given eleven times, Schumann twenty-three, Liszt sixteen, and Wagner eighteen times.

It was, however, only little by little, and in the face of some grumbling on the part of audiences and much ridicule by the critics, that at first tolerance and then some degree of liking for these compositions was attained. To the public it was like speaking in an unknown tongue, and their unaccustomed ears found neither pleasure nor improvement, and the critics were hardly in better plight. In fact, the criticisms of

musical performances in those days, as seen in the "great dailies," could hardly be considered as helps in the acquisition of musical knowledge or the cultivation of musical taste. They were generally unlearned, often unjust, and always unreliable. Many, if not a majority, of the members of the society were in musical intelligence and culture far in advance not only of their audiences generally, but of the critics also. Besides the two accomplished conductors, Eisfeld and Bergmann, there were also in the Society such men as Bristow, Reiff, Mosenthal, Noll, Matzka, Bergner, Jacoby, Ritzel, Mollenhauer, Timm, Scharfenberg, Hill, and Thomas—for in those days Theodore Thomas, since so well known as one of the foremost orchestral conductors in America, and perhaps in the world, was a performing member in the New York Philharmonic Society. A

score of other names deserve a place in the same list. These were men who could appreciate as well as interpret the composers of the new school. They saw their value, and, while perceiving the difficulties to be encountered, were willing to sacrifice some present popularity and gain, for the sake of pursuing a course which they deemed worthy, dignified, and useful. This was true in the main, although a few members, and especially Bristow, opposed the innovation. The society therefore went forward, notwithstanding these hindrances, and scarcely a concert passed without the work of some representative of the new school appearing on the programme. "But, Mr. Bergmann," said some one as they were selecting a programme for the coming concert, "the people don't like Wagner." "Den dey must hear him till dey do," said

Bergmann. And they *did* hear him, and they learned to understand and admire him.

In 1864 Eisfeld resigned the conductorship, and from that time on until near the time of his death in 1876 Bergmann was sole conductor.

From this hasty sketch some idea may be formed of the *personnel* and work of the Philharmonic Society during the first twenty-five years of its existence. In its little domestic trials and difficulties the public is scarcely interested. Its dividends were not such as to excite the cupidity of its members, nor was the glory obtained always calculated to generate enthusiasm ; still there was no thought of abandonment, and the object which was set forth in the constitution, namely, "the advancement of instrumental music," was kept well in view. The constant practice of the society was steadily

increasing its capabilities, and the standard of excellence was continually advanced. The rehearsal of Beethoven's Symphony in C-minor for the first concert in 1842 is frequently spoken of by the few original members now alive and who participated in it, as something wonderful for its roughness; and the frantic efforts of the conductor, U. C. Hill, to obtain a *pianissimo*, or even a tolerable *piano*, are mentioned with a smile.\* From the imperfect work of those days to the smooth rehearsals of more difficult compositions at a later day was indeed a great "advancement" in instrumental music. This improvement in technical skill, along with the education of the public up to the point of appreciation

\* Of these original members six are still living, viz., Dodworth, Ensign, Helfenritter, Johnson, Scharfenberg, and Timm, to nearly all of whom the writer is indebted for favors and information.

of the best class of orchestral music, both of the old and the new schools, was the work actually performed.

Since that time its labors and influence have been much more matters of general observation and favorable criticism.

With the twenty-sixth season, Dr. Doremus commenced his term of office as president of the society, a position which he accepted with reluctance, his own conviction being that it should be occupied only by a person of eminence in the society and in the profession. Divisions and jealousies among the members of the society, however, rendered it desirable that some person of energy, tact, and practical knowledge outside its own membership should be its presiding officer, and, after long deliberation, Dr. Doremus consented to accept the position upon the following conditions :



First, that the orchestra should be largely increased, so that no concert should be given with less than one hundred performers; second, that only eminent artists should be engaged as soloists, and that they should invariably be paid or a proper *honorarium* be given; third, that the concerts should be given in the handsomest and most commodious building that could be obtained for the purpose; fourth, that the concerts should be properly advertised in the daily newspapers. The conditions were accepted, and thus an immense change in the business policy of the society was effected.

The Academy of Music was again secured for the concerts and rehearsals; cards of invitation to the rehearsals were prepared by the president and sent out in all directions to persons of wealth, prominence, or taste, society people, and everybody

whom it was thought desirable to interest in the society and its affairs. Bergmann was still the conductor, the orchestra was augmented to over one hundred performers, and the new-school element in the programme was not diminished. Artists like Parepa-Rosa, Ole Bull, Mills, and Miss Topp were engaged, and on one occasion Edwin Booth read Byron's "Manfred," accompanied by Schumann's music, beautifully rendered by the orchestra. The result was as anticipated. The concerts were crowded by fashionable and remunerative audiences, which never failed of being both instructed and delighted.

Animated by the new influence which had come into its business affairs, and with its concerts under the excellent conductorship of Bergmann, the society continued eminently successful. Dr. Doremus

was chosen and served as president during three successive seasons, but in 1870, much to the regret both of the society and the public, he declined another election.

Mr. George T. Strong was then chosen president for the twenty-ninth season, and filled the office with great fidelity and acceptability. He was succeeded by Mr. Henry G. Stebbins, Mr. Edward Schermerhorn, Mr. Julius Hallgarten, and Mr. J. W. Drexel, all persons of influence and social position, and all chosen from outside the Society's regular membership. Mr. Drexel still fills the office in a most efficient and acceptable manner.

Bergmann, though at last with declining health and energy, yet with undiminished enthusiasm for his art, and love for the newer forms and development of it which he had labored so diligently to interpret,

retained the conductorship until 1876, when he was obliged to retire and was succeeded by Dr. Damrosch, who conducted the concerts of the thirty-fifth season. The following year Mr. Theodore Thomas first appeared as conductor of the Philharmonic Society, but being absent from the city the next season, the concerts were directed by Mr. Ad. Neuendorf and Mr. Matzka. In 1879 Mr. Thomas resumed the conductorship.

To follow step by step the career of the society in its later development, would be impossible in the limits here accorded. Under the able leadership of Mr. Thomas, while the older classical music has not been neglected, the music of the later composers has received special attention, and the grand productions of Wagner particularly have received treatment of the most able and satisfactory character. The

number of the orchestra has been still further augmented, the interest of its concerts has been enhanced, its general standard of excellence elevated, its reputation has been extended, and its dividends made highly satisfactory; in short, the Philharmonic Society of New York is to-day a splendid success, and one of the most perfect organizations of its kind in the world.

From being a cosmopolitan society, however, in which many nationalities were represented, and in which the English-speaking element and influence predominated, it has come to be almost exclusively a German organization. This, at first sight, would seem hardly necessary in an American metropolis; it may be, however, only the musical expression for the law of "the survival of the fittest." Whether art is cultivated with a more generous love or a

greater self-sacrifice, it might seem invidious to inquire and unimportant to decide, for the object of the society, not only in the advancement of instrumental music, but in the general cultivation of taste and the gratification of large and cultivated audiences, is abundantly accomplished ; only in the magnificent success of to-day it is but justice to remember the pioneers and early campaigners, whose labors, sacrifices, and varying successes have made at last so grand a success possible.

The following items may possess some historical interest. The first concert of the society was given with fifty performers.

The nationality of the members for the first year was as follows : American and English, 24 ; German, 22 ; French, 4 ; Italian, 2.

The society received its act of incorporation Feb. 17, 1853.

During the first twenty-five years the concerts were given at the following places : Apollo Hall, Assembly Rooms, Apollo Saloon, Niblo's Concert Saloon, Metropolitan Hall, Broadway Tabernacle, Niblo's Garden, Academy of Music, Irving Hall, and Steinway Hall. Since the beginning of the twenty-sixth season they have been given at the Academy of Music.

The number of concerts in each season has been increased at different times from three to six.

No list of members is known to exist earlier than the commencement of the second season.

## XXI.

The old Park Theatre—The season of 1827-8  
—Malibran—Season of 1830-1.

On my arrival in New York in 1827 the old Park Theatre was under the management of Mr. Edmund Simpson. It long carried the *soubriquet* of "Old Drury," having for many years been under the same management as the old London Drury Lane Theatre.

It was the popular New York place of amusement in those days, where all the European celebrities visiting America made their bow, and where many sparks of native genius also gave forth their brightest scintillations. A recent writer \*

\* The late Richard Grant White.



has given some very unpleasant impressions of the house, nevertheless people managed to get a vast deal of enjoyment there, and certainly my own impressions are far from bearing the same dismal coloring as his.

Of the noted actors and singers whom I had so often seen in London, Cooke, Edmund Kean, the elder Booth, the elder Wallack, Incledon, and others had visited America previous to 1827, and some of them had already made New York their home.

The season of 1827-8 at the Park Theatre opened Sept. 3d with Simpson as manager, Barry as stage manager, and De Luce as leader of the orchestra. Amongst the actors were Hilson, Woodhull, the two Placides, Howard, Jones, Williams, Knight, Nixcen, and Wheatley; Mesdames Hilson, Hackett, Sharp, Wheatley,

Barry, and Moreland, and Misses Bland and Brundage. Cooper, then an old man, though still a favorite, Horn, the singer and composer, Miss Lydia Kelley, and Clara Fisher, then a juvenile, afterwards Mrs. Meader, all appeared during the season as "stars." The opening piece was "Paul Pry," with Hilson as *Paul*. George Holland was at the Bowery Theatre, and Malibran, the Garcia Opera Troupe having disbanded, sang there in an English version of the "Barber of Seville." Forrest was also an attraction there the same season.

Malibran, with whose name is associated all that is fascinating as a woman and an actress, as well as pleasing and admirable as a vocalist, was one of those rare and phenomenal beings who appear amongst us only at long intervals. Her father was the famous tenor Garcia. He

was the first to bring Italian opera in any thing like complete form to America, and thus, although failing to establish the opera as a permanent institutions here, he gave an impulse to taste in that direction which never was entirely lost. The company which he then presented, though incomplete in orchestra and chorus, has in many respects scarcely since been excelled. Under such circumstances it is no wonder that New York audiences took kindly to Italian opera without previous training. Even in this splendid company the daughter of Garcia, Maria Félicité, then only about seventeen years of age, was the chief attraction. Her father had been her teacher, constant and unwearied as an instructor, but a taskmaster also most cruel and remorseless. He made the talented child the world-renowned artist, but his ambition, rapacity, and brutality

led her to accept a marriage ill suited to say the least, and, according to the rumor of the time, wholly repugnant to her feelings. M. Malibran, the French merchant, supposed to be of fabulous wealth but thrice her age, became her suitor and obtained her hand. A recent number of *Temple Bar* informs us that for this sacrifice of his peerless daughter Garcia received the sum of \$50,000, which M. Malibran paid by delivering to him a cargo of linen which he had just purchased. Garcia got off to Mexico with the goods, where he disposed of them to advantage, but was soon after robbed of the whole proceeds by brigands. It turned out that M. Malibran had never paid for the goods, but was already bankrupt, and was sent to the debtor's prison by the original owners, who lost the whole amount involved in the transaction. For-

tunately for the lovers of music Malibran was thus compelled to resume her profession. She recommenced her career as soprano at old Grace Church, then below Rector Street, and, as before remarked, appeared in English opera at the Bowery in 1827. She left the country for Europe the same year, taking her farewell benefit as *Princess of Navarre* in "John of Paris." In Paris she afterwards obtained a divorce from her husband and married De Beriot, the great violinist. But neither by this marriage was her happiness assured ; for however great his talent as an artist, De Beriot certainly failed to appreciate the superb personal and womanly qualities of his lovely wife ; and his treatment of her was neglectful, not to say cruel and even brutal. While travelling in Italy soon after their marriage, Malibran was seized with

the fever at Rome, and De Beriot, leaving his wife to the care of an attendant, sought personal safety elsewhere. She became most alarmingly ill, and her attendants also proving faithless and cowardly, forsook her in her extremity. It remained for an American gentleman, then residing at Rome but now a citizen of New York, learning of her sad condition and finding her unattended, delirious, and in a condition of neglect such as it is impossible here to describe, to nurse her back to life and to the career which she had already made brilliant and memorable.

She died in England while engaged at the Birmingham festivals in 1836, while yet only twenty-eight years old. She was almost worshipped wherever her voice had been heard, and her death was regretted as a public calamity. Upon her unfeel-

ing husband an indignant public bestowed unstinted execration.

The season of 1830-1 was remarkable for the number and variety of excellent actors who appeared at the different theatres.

In the autumn of 1830 Charles Kean, then not twenty years of age, first appeared at the Park Theatre in his round of Shakespearian characters. He appeared also in 1833, 1838, and 1839, and was a favorite here before he had won his way to high favor in England by his excellent representation of *Hamlet*. In 1839 he was accompanied by his wife, the charming English actress, earlier known as Miss Ellen Tree. In 1865 they revisited this country for the last time, and their performance of "Louis XI" is doubtless remembered by many theatre-goers of to-day. Charles Kean was inelegant in person and manner, pos-

sessed a harsh and disagreeable voice, and lacked the fire and genius which so characterized his father, yet by industry and determination, joined with a certain talent and many social and manly qualities, he achieved distinction.

During the same year appeared the youthful prodigy, Master Joseph Burke, known as the "Irish Roscius." He was about eleven years old, and made his appearance as *Young Norval*. In addition to his dramatic performances he led the orchestra, played a violin solo, and did a general variety business. He was an immense favorite for a time but was soon lost sight of. It is only fair to add, however, that he became a violinist of some celebrity, and on several occasions was solo performer for the New York Philharmonic Society.

Peter Richings, Mr. and Mrs.



Hackett in "Rip Van Winkle," Mrs. Vernon, and, lastly, Forrest, making his first appearance in "Metamore," were all attractions of this season.

## XXII.

### Theatrical Riots.

Considering the general good-feeling and absence of sensitiveness which now exist between the United States and Great Britain, the many expressions of friendliness which have lately passed between the two nations, and especially the more than ordinary good-will and cordiality exhibited by the most prominent members of the dramatic profession of the two nations toward each other at the present time, it is amusing to look back upon the excessive jealousy with which the two nations viewed each other no longer than thirty or forty years ago. Even the children of

each nation then learned the language of detraction and vituperation; little things served to arouse the smouldering animosities, which, kept alive as they were by unnecessary and often ill-natured and contemptuous criticism on the one hand, and needless though not altogether unnatural sensitiveness on the other, were always ready to burst into flame.

Curiously enough these jealousies cropped out most sharply on various occasions in connection with dramatic affairs; and they sometimes took the form of riotous outbreaks. I remember four of these disturbances, though one of them occurred before I came to this country, and happened in connection with the great tragedian, Edmund Kean. It was on the occasion of his second visit to America. In a fit of temper, to which unfortunately he was no stran-

ger, he gave vent to his anger in ill-natured speeches concerning American manners, audiences, and criticism, which were not slow in gaining circulation and arousing widespread indignation. As a consequence of this feeling, upon his next appearance at the Park Theatre he was received with angry and hostile demonstrations. His performance was not permitted to be heard, and amidst tumult and violence he was obliged to retire. The following day an apologetic letter from Kean was published in one of the newspapers, which allayed to some extent the popular irritation, and he was allowed to finish his engagement, though with only very moderate success.

In Boston the hostility was even more decided. He had already made himself unpopular in that city by his indiscreet criticisms, and now, no

sooner did he make his appearance upon the stage than a violent outbreak commenced. Not a word of the play was listened to, nor would the audience allow any attempt at conciliatory speech, but a perfect pandemonium of noise and angry disapproval was maintained.

Portions of the parquet were ripped up by the excited audience and thrown into the orchestra and upon the stage, and so violent was the assault, that he was compelled ignominiously to retire and leave the city.

In 1831 occurred the disturbance known as the "Anderson row." Mr. and Mrs. Anderson were charming singers, and people of excellent conduct altogether. He was a tenor of good English reputation, and she was a sister of Madame Vestris, the celebrated singer and actress, and daughter of Bartolozzi, a famous en-

graver of that time, and whose works are now again attracting attention. While on their way to New York on board the Liverpool packet, she was addressed in a most unbecoming manner by a New York man-about-town who was also a passenger. Her husband very properly resented the insult, called the fellow an impudent Yankee, and, very likely, threatened him with a thrashing when they should get ashore.

On arriving in New York the Andersons were to appear at the Park Theatre in the opera of "Guy Mannering." Our New York "gentleman," in the meantime, proceeded to spread abroad a report of injury and insult from "that Englishman," Anderson, and the opprobrious epithet, "Yankee," was made to do conspicuous duty. He got together his friends and filled the theatre with a hostile crowd. The appearance of

Anderson, as *Henry Bertram*, in the second act, was the signal, and a fearful uproar commenced. Stamping, yells, and cat-calls resounded through the theatre, and eggs and other disagreeable missiles deluged the stage. De Luce was in the leader's chair, and was leaning forward to speak to one of the orchestra when an egg just glanced from his bald pate and fell with a thud upon the leader's copy of the opera, at the duet, "Now hope, now fear," that being the point at which the row began. The music was mine, and there was thus left to me a visible remembrancer of the Anderson row, as well as a flavor of the true inwardness which prompted it. Both Simpson and Barry came forward and attempted to quiet the storm, but it was of no avail. Nothing could be heard, and the performance ended in tumult. The next attempt

to sing was attended by even worse disturbances. The theatre and streets around were packed with an excited crowd, and any one attempting to speak for the Andersons was uncere-  
moniously "hustled out." The result of this disgraceful business was, that, a personal affair being allowed to arouse national prejudice to an ungovernable pitch, these talented artists, who would have contributed much both to the enjoyment and cultivation of the New York public, were ignominiously driven away.

In September, 1833, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Wood came out at the Park Theatre in the opera of "Cinderella." Mrs. Wood, formerly the charming Miss Paton, was one of the most highly talented as well as deservedly popular artists who had ever appeared in this country. She was married in 1825 to Lord William Lenox, but the marriage proved un-



happy and ended in a divorce five years later. She afterwards married Mr. Wood, a talented singer who had rapidly risen in his profession, and certainly had some of the faults which are apt to accompany sudden success. It was during their second visit to this country, in May, 1836, that the "Wood row" occurred. The cause of the trouble was briefly as follows: Mrs. Conduit, a stock actress and singer at the Park Theatre, and somewhat of a favorite with the New York public, had advertised her benefit for a certain night as the *Princess* in "Massaniello," Mr. and Mrs. Wood being expected to assist.

Whether on account of previous misunderstanding, or from some other cause, I do not know, but they declined to appear, and advertised a concert for their own benefit upon the same night. The result was

very little benefit for Mrs. Conduit. A grievance was immediately presented to the public on her account. A leading newspaper (one of its reporters taking a personal interest in the matter) took up the cudgel for the aggrieved lady; public sympathy was appealed to in behalf of the "American widow with a family of children dependent entirely upon her exertions," and national prejudice was again invoked to the rescue. All this was rather amusing, considering the facts in the case: for the "American widow" had a husband at the same time playing in the orchestra; they were both natives of England, and they had no children. However, it served. The Woods made their appearance the following night in the opera of "Fra Diavolo," and instead of an operatic performance there was a riot. As soon as Wood made his appearance

the storm commenced ; the opera was immediately stopped, and a scene of uproar and confusion ensued. Simpson, Barry, also the mayor, and Hayes, the chief constable and a great favorite with the public, all appeared and tried to quell the tumult, but to no purpose : no one was allowed to say a word in behalf of the Woods ; they must go.

As a climax to this wretched affair, large fragments of benches which had been broken up by the mob were thrown upon the stage and into the orchestra, to the great dismay and danger of the occupants ; whereupon, with a long-continued yell, the disgraceful scene was brought to a close. The Woods were driven away, and soon after left America. The affair died out, or perhaps the public saw they had been imposed upon ; at all events, on the return of

these charming singers in 1840, they were most warmly welcomed.

On the 10th of May, 1849, there occurred a disturbance of a much more serious and formidable character than any of its predecessors, and fortunately it was the last of any importance. It is known as the "Astor Place riot." Who was responsible for this disgraceful and fatal affair, it is not altogether easy to determine; but whatever other influences may have aided, the spirit of rivalry and the ill-feeling which existed between the two great tragedians, Forrest and Macready, particularly on the part of the former and his injudicious friends, were the mainspring and cause of the trouble. Forrest charged that Macready was the author of unfavorable and unjust criticism, thus injuring his English success and reputation. Forrest himself, on the other hand, publicly

hissed Macready in the "play scene" in "Hamlet." Bitter feelings, national prejudices, and a general antagonism were indulged in, and thus matters stood when Macready, returning from a successful Southern tour, was making arrangements to play an engagement at the "Astor Place Opera House," then under the management of Hackett and Niblo; and he was to open with "Macbeth" on the 7th of May. It was rumored through the day that there might be trouble, and an unusual amount of the rough element found its way into the theatre. Even newsboys and *gamins* were hired to go to the theatre and hiss Macready. The play commenced. Sefton, Chippendale, and Andrews, as the *Witches*, were well received; but when Macready appeared, confusion commenced. Hooting, hissing, stamping, and cries of "Off, off! Go

home, go home!" rendered every attempt to be heard from the stage futile. Eggs, earth, vegetables, and missiles of every description were hurled and heaped upon the stage. The friends of Macready cheered and cried "Go on!" and so, though not a word could be heard, the play proceeded in dumb show. As the curtain fell at the end of the first act, deafening shouts and yells went through the theatre, and the cry was raised: "Three cheers for Forrest!" The cheers were given, and three more, and then groans for Macready.

The second act was merely a repetition of the noise and confusion of the first, and at its close many of the audience, and especially ladies, left the theatre. The scene then became still more violent. Fragments of benches, chairs, and every available missile were hurled

into the orchestra and upon the stage. The musicians precipitately fled for safety, and Macready, finding it impossible to maintain the unequal war, retired, and the mob dispersed.

Such was the riot within the theatre on the evening of the 7th of May.

Macready of course decided not to attempt another performance in the face of such hostility, but the next day he received numerous letters from prominent citizens and other persons, desiring him to appear again, and assuring him of protection and success. Influenced by these letters and the persuasion of his friends, he consented and his appearance was announced for the evening of May 10th. On the afternoon of that day placards were displayed in the following style :

“ Workingmen !

“ Shall Americans or English Rule  
“ in this City ?

“ The crew of the British steamer  
have threatened all Americans who  
shall dare to express their opinions  
this night at the

“ *English Aristocratic Opera House.*

“ We advise no violence, but a free  
expression of opinion to all men.

“ Workingmen !—Freemen ! Stand  
by your lawful rights to-night !

“ AMERICAN COMMITTEE.”

That night an audience of two thousand people packed the “ Astor Place Opera House,” probably fifty to one of whom were friends of Macready. Matsell, chief of police, was present with nearly five hundred men under his direction distributed in various parts of the house, and when the rioters had made themselves sufficiently conspicuous, at a



signal from the chief they were promptly arrested and taken from the auditorium. The play then went on without further interruption within the house, but outside a scene of exciting interest had commenced.

The Opera House, as is well known, was upon the site of the present Clinton Hall and Mercantile Library building, just east of Broadway and in the angle formed by the junction of Eighth Street and Astor Place. About this angle, and chiefly in Astor Place, fully ten thousand excited people had collected and were already evincing their hostile intentions by shouting and throwing stones at the theatre. Nearly every window in the building was thus riddled, and the corridors were filled with stones and broken glass. A sewer was being constructed in Astor Place, and preparatory to the work a long strip of pave-

ment had been taken up, and the stones thus displaced furnished abundant and dangerous missiles for the crowd. At intervals a rush was made to force an entrance to the theatre. Fortunately the police were in sufficient force to frustrate efforts of this kind, but the house presented a condition of absolute siege. The riot was now assuming a truly alarming aspect.

About half past nine o'clock a mounted troop, followed by a detachment of the "National Guard," now the "Seventh Regiment," under the command of my old friend, General William Hall, came up Broadway in double-quick time, and wheeled into Astor Place. They marched rapidly past the theatre, the crowd giving way for the moment, and took up a position in the open space toward Fourth Avenue. Soon after this, the play being

finished, the audience, protected by the presence of the militia and the large police force, left the theatre in safety. The rioters, however, soon regained their courage, and commenced jeering the troops and assaulting them with paving-stones. Several arrests were made by the police, and amongst those arrested was Judson, *alias* "Ned Buntline," the editor of several publications bearing that name. The Riot Act was now read, and the assembly was ordered to disperse. All this, however, had no effect in diminishing the crowd or allaying the excitement. The assault with paving-stones was resumed with still greater energy. Many of the soldiers were already disabled, and General Hall himself had been severely hurt in the cheek. It was evident that a crisis was at hand, for it was now only a question which should pre-

vail—law and order, or the mob, —and it was decided to take active measures for the establishment of order. The militia was directed to fire, but at first with blank cartridges and over the heads of the rioters. The volley was received with derision. The order was then reluctantly given to fire by platoons directly upon the crowd. The order was obeyed, and with decided and fatal effect. Two or three volleys having been fired, the mob, with a yell of execration, gave way, carrying their dead and wounded to their homes or to the neighboring drug-stores. They soon returned, however, more exasperated than ever, and, vowing vengeance, resumed the assault with their dangerous missiles. This time a single volley sufficed to check their work ; they gave up the contest, and, sullenly retiring, dispersed in every direction.

Of the Seventh Regiment two hundred and eleven officers and men were out that night, and of these one hundred and forty-one, almost two thirds, were injured and fifty-three were disabled and carried home. Of the mob about thirty were killed and thirty-six were reported wounded, but without doubt very many more were wounded who never reported their injuries. From that time to the present, the Seventh Regiment has been looked upon as the natural champion of law and order and the guardian of life and property against riot and violence. Since that memorable night the organization has met with numerous occasions upon which to prove its title to such high consideration, and it is only just to say that it has never been found wanting.

Such was the tragic and disgraceful "Astor Place riot," of May 10th,

1849, the offspring of personal hatred and national prejudice, existing mainly perhaps amongst the ignorant and vicious, but certainly countenanced by those who should have scorned to use such means under any circumstances. At present it is pleasant to believe that such prejudices could never be aroused in any such cause ; and especially, with the excellent feeling and good-will now existing, would such a scene be impossible in connection with members of the theatrical profession.

## XXIII.

Charles and Fanny Kemble in New York—The  
Cholera of 1832—The Ravels.

In 1832, another year conspicuous for the dramatic talent which it brought to this country, Charles Kemble and his talented daughter Frances or "Fanny Kemble," as she was familiarly called, came to America. They played together in "Hamlet," "Romeo and Juliet," and other noted pieces, and then, as a climax to their popularity, made their appearance in the "Hunchback."

Graceful, artistic, genuine Charles Kemble! He was somewhat changed of course from the popular young actor he was when I used to steal

away from my father's library and haunt the wings or the orchestra to hear him speak the famous speech of *Mark Antony*. Still, he was far from having lost the old charm or the splendid qualities which always rendered him a favorite wherever he appeared, and even now in the "Hunchback" he played the almost juvenile part of *Sir Thomas Clifford*. His daughter Fanny was then a charming young lady of twenty-one, very talented, and an immense favorite as an actress. Later she also wielded a facile though somewhat purgent pen, and her strictures upon American manners were according to the fashion of the time, and alienated some who had been her ardent admirers. Later, however, while travelling in Germany, she made a sort of good-natured serio-comic retraction, a bit of which is as follows: "Oh, my poor dear Ameri-



can fellow-citizens, how humbly on my knees do I beg your pardon for all the reproaches which I have levelled against your national diversion of spitting and the consequent filth which you create around you ! and whereas spittoons have been hitherto the bane of my life in the United States, a spittoon here to-day would have been the joy of my heart and the delight of my eyes." And then, with genuine admiration, she goes on to speak of the security from injury or insult with which a woman in those days could travel in America, from Maine to Texas. While here, she married Pierce Butler, of Philadelphia, but after a few years she obtained a divorce, and resuming her maiden name, was always after known as Mrs. Kemble. Fanny Kemble never had a love for her profession as an actress ; she went upon the stage to retrieve the pecun-

iary affairs of her family, and she left it when she married. After her divorce, she became almost more popular as a reader than she had before been as an actress.

The same year that the Kembles made their appearance was also memorable on account of the great cholera epidemic. It created a profound sensation, and the bulletins were thronged day and night to learn, so far as the authorities saw fit to publish it, the number of deaths and the progress of the epidemic. This was early in July, 1832. As good luck would have it, those high-priests of fun, the Ravels arrived in New York nearly at the same time as the cholera, and appearing at the Park Theatre about the middle of July, they played to full houses through the whole of the epidemic.

They were a most merry and

mirth-provoking crew, and I am sure must have driven "blue devils" and dull care from many timorous hearts, and so perhaps saved many from the devastating plague. The performances were short, being over at ten o'clock, and I think this was the only place of amusement open at that time in the city. It was frequented by many for the very purpose of keeping a cheerful mind, that the body might remain in health. The idea is as old as Boccaccio at least, and doubtless has often proved useful since, but doubly so, of course when, as in the case of Boccaccio's gay imaginary story-tellers, fun and frolic can be supplemented by good country air.

From the Park Theatre the Ravels went to the Bowery, and then to Niblo's, where they remained nearly a whole generation, and where many, who are still frequenters of the the-

atre, though able to speak of times long past, have enjoyed their wonderful feats of agility, their almost speaking pantomime, and their constant fusillade of irresistible comicalities.

## XXIV.

The Seguins — “ Amilie ” — “ The Bohemian Girl.”

In 1838, at Wallack's National Theatre, Rooke's Opera of “ Amilie or The Love Test ” was produced. With this opera also first appeared Mr. Edward Seguin, an English basso of unusual excellence. Seguin had passed with the highest honors through the Royal Academy of Music in London, and appeared with great success at the Italian Opera House, Covent Garden Theatre, and Drury Lane, and he immediately became a favorite here. His rich voice, genial manner, excellent acting, and whimsical by-play always secured for him abundant

and well-merited applause. The new opera "Amilie" was an immediate success, taking rank in public favor with "Cinderella" and "Sonnambula." The same season, in February, 1839, Mrs. Seguin also made her début here as *Rosina* in "The Barber of Seville," with De Begnis as *Figaro*, and Seguin as the *Doctor*. Mrs. Seguin was also a graduate of the Royal Academy and at one time a sub-professor there. She appeared, while yet very young, at the Philharmonic concerts in London, and also at the Italian opera, and at Drury Lane, where both she and Mr. Seguin sang with Malibran. She was looked upon as one of the most accomplished musicians and pleasing singers that had visited New York. The Seguins were identified with English opera here for many years, but their distinguishing success was achieved in Balfe's "Bo-

hemian Girl," which was first brought out here in 1844 at the Park Theatre, with Seguin as *Devilshoff*, Mrs. Seguin as *Arline*, and Frazer as *Thaddeus*. Thomas Barry was stage manager, and Thomas Y. Chubb led the orchestra. The opera was beautifully put upon the stage; the ballet in the first scene, since generally omitted, was made specially beautiful and attractive. It had a most extraordinary success both here and throughout the country. I very much doubt if any other opera has had as many representations in America as "The Bohemian Girl." Much of the humorous by-play of *Devilshoff*, which then and ever since has contributed so much to the success of the opera, was original with Seguin.

His very funny play as *Beppo* in "Fra Diavolo," *Leperello* in "Don Giovanni," and *Biju* in "The Pos-

tilion," will be still remembered with pleasure and regret by many old playgoers. Mr. Seguin's health at length failing, he was obliged to give up singing, but still kept the stage, playing at Wallack's with great success almost up to the time of his death in 1852. Mrs. Seguin is still a resident of New York. Mr. Edward Seguin, lately deceased, so long and favorably known in connection with English opera, along with Mrs. Zelda Seguin, Castle, Campbell, and other favorites, was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Seguin.

Madame Parepa-Rosa, whose cheerful face, superb voice, and artistic singing were chief attractions in the musical world some fifteen years ago, was their niece. Who, that ever heard that magnificent voice, so full, so rich, and apparently inexhaustible, so competent for any



emergency, can ever forget it? She seemed actually to revel in the exuberance of her own singing. How few voices have ever been able to give with full effect the grand *scena* from "Oberon" — "Ocean, thou mighty monster"! Madame Parepa-Rosa's rendering of it, accompanied by the New York Philharmonic Society, at one of its concerts, was one of the few perfect renditions that have ever been heard here. It was simply grand. She was equally successful in grand Italian, German, or English opera, in oratorio, or simple ballad, and she was at home in nearly every modern language. To her plans and efforts are due, in a great measure, the remarkable perfection and success which, under the direction of her husband, Mr. Carl Rosa, the English opera has lately attained in London.

## XXV.

Edwin Forrest and Charlotte Cushman.

Amongst American-born actors, Edwin Forrest doubtless arrived at the highest distinction of any in his time. His powerful physique, his unusual and striking personal appearance, his immense voice, and his great talent in certain styles of acting all joined to make him popular with the multitude, and in part at least to deserve the very high praise which was bestowed upon him by many of the critics.

A worker in various capacities in boyhood and youth, he made even lowly pursuits stepping-stones by which at length, with study and an indomitable will, he came to walk

the tragic stage an acknowledged master and with great applause. Not only here, but also in England, he attracted enthusiastic audiences. He appeared in New York as early as 1826 in the regular round of Shakespearian characters—*Othello*, *Richard III.*, *Coriolanus*, *King Lear*, and *Hamlet*, and also in Howard Payne's *Brutus*. Of these parts, his *Coriolanus*, *Othello*, and *King Lear* were reckoned amongst his finest representations. Afterwards he appeared as *Richelieu*, in which character he especially excelled ; then as *Claude Melnotte* in "The Lady of Lyons," and in other plays of that type. In 1830-1 he first appeared in parts written especially for himself, of which the first was "Metamora," by John A. Stone. Then followed "Jack Cade," by Conrad, and "The Gladiator," by Dr. Bird. "Oraloosa " and "The Broker of

Bogota " were also his special property. Most of these pieces have slight claims to literary merit, but being adapted to Forrest's style of acting, some of them became immensely popular, and a large share of his bulky fortune is said to have been realized by the representation of these plays.

Charlotte Cushman and Forrest present some similar characteristics. Miss Cushman, like Forrest, had a powerful physique and a striking though not in its best sense distinguished personal appearance. She was tall and awkward in figure and movement, and little pleasing in manner; her voice, which at first was such as to warrant her appearance in opera, soon broke down, lost its musical quality, and became coarse and almost masculine. Yet she had dramatic talent, force of character, and business tact, all com-

bined, and all in sufficient degree to make her career a phenomenal one. She excelled in portraying the coarser attributes of humanity, and her most striking and popular representations were in violent, criminal, and almost brutal characters. As *Nancy Sykes* she left little to be desired; *Meg Merrilese* and *Lady Macbeth* were also amongst her most powerful and popular representations; but these were all abnormal types of womanhood, and in these she excelled, while in proportion as her characters approached a normal type, or required imagination or the romantic element, or any of the qualities needful for the portrayal of the gentler passions, she failed to represent them truthfully. Pasta, that queen of histrionic art as well as song, to whom, in her best days, I often listened, chilled the blood of her auditors by her terrific represen-

tations of such characters as *Medea*, *Semiramide*, and *Otello*, convulsed them with her whimsical comicalities in "Prova d'un Opera Seria," and delighted them with her fresh and charming presentment of the simple-minded and loving *Amina* la Son-nambula ; a versatility which, while it may not be essential to a certain kind of greatness, is certainly in some degree a need.

Miss Cushman, while possessing great power, even great talent, was physically and mentally unfitted for representing many of the characters which she assumed. After witnessing her acting many times at various stages of her career, and being fully aware of the great popularity which she enjoyed, both here and in Great Britain, I can form no other judgment.

Forrest chose his characters with greater discretion, but even with

him taste was too often sacrificed to present effect. So looking back over a long line of famous tragic actors and actresses, from Cooke, Kemble, and Mrs. Siddons to Rachel, Ristori, and Edwin Booth, and placing these two great and popular representatives of the profession in America in contrast with the best whom I have seen amongst them all, I cannot help thinking that there was a crudeness and lack of refinement and of artistic taste apparent in both Forrest and Miss Cushman, which, if they could again appear upon the stage, without the prestige which they had already secured, would be so evident that while it might not change the verdict of the multitude, would essentially modify the position which was then accorded them in the artistic world, competent critics of to-day being the judges.

Forrest was domineering and au-

tocratic in his manner toward those with whom he acted ; *he* occupied the stage while he was upon it, and no one thought of questioning his right.

Miss Cushman was equally assumptive in her manner, but her right was not always so quietly acknowledged. I remember a *Macbeth* thus expressing himself *sotto voce* to *Macduff*: "I wish Charlotte would play her own part and not undertake to play mine also ; it would n't surprise me if she wanted to do the combat scene before the week is out."

Peter Richings, who was an excellent actor as well as singer, had the same habit of interfering. John Braham was once playing *Massaniello* to Richings' *Pietro*. "It is my opinion," said Braham, "that this opera should have been called 'Pietro,' for *Peter* certainly undertakes to play the title *rôle*."



## XXVI.

Hilson—Hackett—Yankee Hill.

Hilson, who was already on the stage in 1827, was an excellent *Paul Pry*,—capital, in fact, to those who had not seen Liston. He was the original here, and was disgusted with the part while it was in rehearsal and before it was put upon the stage. When asked how he liked it, he replied: “Not at all; it’s poor stuff. I don’t see how Liston makes any thing of it.” It was, however, a great success, and Hilson contributed his full share to the result. Mrs. Wheatly was also in the cast. I think it was at her benefit one night that the principal characters changed parts. Barnes was *Mrs. Subtile*, Hilson was

*Phebe*, and Mrs. Wheatly was *Paul !* Hilson and Hackett were long the favorite comedians at the Park Theatre and elsewhere throughout the country.

James H. Hackett early in life evinced some inclination for the stage, but did not then enter upon it as a profession. Misfortunes in business, together with the fact that he married a very clever actress, were doubtless causes which later directed his attention again to dramatic affairs, and eventually gave to the American stage one of its brightest ornaments. His first appearance in New York was in 1826, as *Justice Woodcock*, and at the same engagement as *Sylvester Daggerwood*; but, owing to "stage fright," his first attempts did not meet with any great success. It was later in dialect parts, and especially in "Yankee" characters, that I first remember him, and in

which he attained his early success. His *Jonathan Swop* the Yankee, *Nimrod Wildfire* the Kentuckian, *Morbleu* the Frenchman, *Rip Van Winkle* the Dutchman, *Sir Pertinax Mac Sycophant*, the Scotchman, and his *Falstaff* were all representations of unusual excellence. He was playing *Falstaff* at the Park Theatre at the time of its final destruction by fire in 1848.

Hackett was quite successful as a manager. He and the late William Niblo were lessees and managers of the Astor Place Opera House at the time of the riot. It was a first-class place of amusement which the roughs and Bowery boys called the "Cod-fish Aristocracy House," and doubtless it was this sentiment which excited their special spite against the house itself on the memorable night of the 10th of May. The same enterprising managers bought

out those excellent artists, Grisi and Mario, at Castle Garden in 1854.

Hackett did some very good literary work, especially his commentary "On Shakspeare's Plays and Actors." He was well received in England, where he made two or three visits. Later he attempted tragedy, but with only moderate success. His reputation as an actor rests upon lighter parts, and especially upon his representations of *Falstaff*.

He was a great favorite with the late President Lincoln. They were well matched as story-tellers, and well could each "set the table in a roar." He was the projector and one of the chief promoters of the plan for the beautiful Shakespeare monument now standing in the Central Park.

At the time of his death, in 1871, the following appeared in the *New York Times* :

“ Mr. Tom Goodwin, a well-posted veteran in musical and dramatic affairs, tells a good anecdote referring to the late Mr. Hackett. He was playing at the old Park Theatre, where he had so often produced his *Rip Van Winkle*, *Col. Wildfire*, and other similar characters, and had taken the town by storm with his wonderful personation of *Falstaff*, a character with which his name has always been associated. At length he was tempted to try his fortunes in tragedy and essayed no less a character than *Hamlet*. On one occasion he was playing this part to a full house on the evening of St. Patrick's Day. In the ‘play scene’ in the third act, the wind instruments go behind the scenes and play a march to bring on the king, queen, and courtiers. Paul Christian, the clarionet player, an enthusiastic Irishman, knew very little of the

stage business of a theatre, and was at a loss what to play for the royal party (the march from 'Judas Mac-cabeus' was usually introduced for this purpose); accordingly he applied to Nidds, the horn player, an old hand at the business, who for a bit of mischief suggested 'St. Patrick's Day in the Morning.' Paul was delighted at the idea, and the cue being given, he lost no time in briskly striking up that patriotic air in which 'the gods' (there was an upper galley then) most heartily joined. The royal party was convulsed; Hackett was in a fearful rage, and his 'too solid flesh' did nearly dissolve, for he was a stout *Hamlet*. Mr. Simpson and Barry, his stage manager, were horrified, though *sub rosa* they quietly enjoyed the fun. Nidds and Paul Christian, the delinquents, were each fined a week's salary, which John Blake, the treas-

urer, returned to them the following week, accompanied by a severe reprimand. It was a standing joke for a time."

Nidds was an eccentric character. He served two terms of enlistment with the Life Guards in England, and being enlisted for a third term without his "knowledge or consent," concluded he was not a "third term man;" so he took French leave and came to America. His term of service included the Waterloo period, though the band did not accompany the regiment in that eventful campaign. He was well acquainted with different members of the organization with which he was so long associated, and had listened to many a tale of the great battle from those who returned. He also knew Shaw, the famous guardsman, who performed such prodigies there. Shaw, was a quiet man, but of large stature

and immense strength, and he was known as a capital boxer. His colonel at one time matched him for a fight with Painter, a noted pugilist of that time, who had vanquished all comers. Shaw was smuggled out of the barracks to the battle-ground, whipped his man in fifteen rounds, and was smuggled back again with very little damage. The colonel bet an enormous sum on the battle, and, of course, won. Afterwards the affair leaked out and came to Lord Cathcart's ears, and when the regiment was ordered to the Continent, he swore a round oath that if they were so anxious for a fight they could now go and fight the French. Poor Shaw never returned. Victor Hugo, in his famous description of Waterloo, in "*Les Miserables*," in recounting the misfortunes which befel the English army during the early part of the day, thus refers to



Shaw : "A sergeant of the English Guards, the best boxer in England, reputed invulnerable by his comrades, had been killed by a little French drummer-boy." It is considered rather a poor immortality to die for one's country and then have one's name spelled wrong in the newspaper ; certainly it was for the valiant fighter Shaw, to be thus erroneously referred to by so great a writer as Victor Hugo. A wounded comrade who saw Shaw's last fight and "lived to tell the tale," often recounted it in the barracks at Knightsbridge. This comrade saw him dismounted, and with his back to the wall, defending himself against six French lancers, who were attacking him all at once. He broke their lances with his ponderous blows, killed some of his assailants, and "the rest they ran away." He was desperately wounded, however, and died

from hemorrhage several hours afterwards. Perhaps this is a little off the subject of American actors.

George Handel Hill, better known by his familiar sobriquet as Yankee Hill, was one of the most popular and genial of those American actors who acquired fame both here and abroad. He was a brother of U. C. Hill, the musician, and first president of the Philharmonic Society. They were both men of unusual talent. Yankee Hill's specialty, as his sobriquet implies, was delineation of Yankee character. He commenced his representations while Hackett was still the favorite in this line of acting, and so popular did he become that Hackett, on his return from one of his European trips, where he had been received with much favor, found it prudent to retire from that particular field, and devote himself more exclusively to Shakespearian studies.

## XXVII.

Chanfrau—The Bowery Boy—T. D. Rice and  
Negro Minstrelsy.

Referring to dialect and character representations, one or two other American actors originated special lines of acting.

In 1848 Chanfrau, since well known in a different line of comedy, and now so lately deceased, created a sensation by his portraiture of the fireman and Bowery boy of the period. The character which served his purpose was *Mose* in Ben Baker's sketch called "A Glance at New York," a character with which his name was then as much associated as Joe Jefferson's is with *Rip Van Winkle*, or Sothern's with *Lord Dun-*

*dreary*. The type was so marked, and peculiar, and the portraiture so exact and ludicrous, that the hit was most effective. That type of fireman, with its distinctive virtues and vices, died out with the old volunteer fire department. The Bowery boy of the same period, with his projected jaw, jerky gait, "long-tail" coat, and peculiar dialect, was a real and distinct class, and though found sporadic in other portions of the city, he had his proper habitat in the historic thoroughfare of the east side. Along with the newsboy of the time, he ate his peanuts at the old Bowery Theatre and roared his applause at the fierce melodramas of Eddy and Scott. His race has long been extinct, and consequently there has been no successor to Chanfrau in that line.

The delineators of negro character and dialect, on the contrary, have

found ample scope for the exercise of their peculiar talent. The original in this class of acting may be set down as T. D. Rice, better known as Daddy Rice. "Coal-black Rose" and a very few other negro melodies had already been sung by George W. Dixon of unsavory memory, but Rice was the first to give that kind of entertainment form and prominence.

A description of the original darkey and Rice's reproduction and improvements have been given by Mr. Edward Conner, a member of his company at the time, in the *New York Times* for June 5, 1881.

"Negro minstrelsy was then (1830) in its infancy, and attracted little attention, but Rice was particularly happy in 'little negro bits.' N. M. Ludlow took a summer company to Louisville. Among the members

were Sol Smith, Conner, and Tom Rice. It was the first regular theatre in the city. Back of the theatre was a livery stable kept by a man named Crow. The actors could look into the stable-yard from the theatre, and were particularly amused by an old decrepit negro who used to do odd jobs for Crow. It was then usual for slaves to call themselves after their owners. So old Daddy had assumed the name of Jim Crow. He was very much deformed, the right shoulder being drawn high up, the left leg stiff and crooked at the knee, giving him a painful but at the same time laughable limp. He used to croon a queer old tune, with words of his own, and at the end of each verse would give a little jump, and when he came down he set his 'heel rockin'.' He called it 'jumping Jim Crow.' The words of the refrain were :

' Wheel about, turn about,  
Do jis so,  
An' ebery time I wheel about,  
I jump Jim Crow.'

Rice watched him closely and saw that here was a character unknown to the stage. He wrote several verses, changed the air somewhat, quickened it a good deal, made up exactly like Daddy, and sang it to a Louisville audience. They were wild with delight, and on the first night he was re-called twenty times. Rice became known as 'Daddy Rice,' and Jim Crow was immortalized. . . . Rice was very quick at improvisation and wrote many of his own farces, like 'The Virginia Mummy,' 'O Hush,' and 'Otello.' A number of them are still stand-bys on the minstrel stage. Not only was he the original of all the lame darkies who have appeared, but he was the original of the dandy darky. *Spruce*

*Pink* in 'The Virginia Mummy' was his first dandy, and entirely his own creation, followed by that of 'Dandy Jim from Caroline.' Rice did not play the dandies himself, but utilized the character, dressing and training another performer for that specialty. As for himself, he was always the lame old 'nig.' The thing took immensely everywhere, and after playing two or three star engagements here, Rice took his company to England. Macready was playing an engagement in London at the time, but so great was the furor to see Jim Crow that it is said he was obliged to close his theatre for lack of patronage."

The regularly organized "bands" of negro minstrels, with their "end men" and standard jokes, were a still later production.



## XXVIII.

William Niblo and Niblo's Garden.

As hotel proprietor, owner and manager of theatres, and patron of music, the drama, and art in general, Mr. William Niblo was for many years a well-known character in New York. I first knew him as proprietor of the popular hotel and restaurant known as the Bank Coffee House, at 43 Pine Street. It was beautifully kept, and at that time was the special resort of *bons vivants*, as was Windust's "Shakespeare," in Park Row, twenty years later.

Opposite the Bank Coffee House was a furniture store, not confined exclusively to the sale of *new* goods, kept by the mother of a well-known

millionaire merchant, now a few years deceased, and from whom young Niblo, when his house had an unexpected run of visitors, sometimes had occasion to hire or purchase, as the case might be, her needful wares. Many years later the millionaire himself and Niblo had business relations, never particularly amicable or harmonious, regarding the garden and theatre, which, though owned by the millionaire, were leased by Niblo, and have for so many years borne his name.

The millionaire was always jealous and distrustful of Niblo. "You have lived too long, Niblo, and you know too much!" he exclaimed in a pet one day. They were both men of keen insight, and when they met, it was diamond cut diamond.

There is an anecdote of Niblo's way of keeping order in his Pine Street house, which, though he was

naturally gentle and kind-hearted as a girl, showed the spirit of the man when aroused.

There were at that time several English officers stationed at New York, who were frequenters of the Coffee House and lovers of the good fare for which it was famous. On one occasion a number of these officers bespoke a dinner to be served for them on Sunday. Mr. Niblo said to them: "Gentlemen, you understand that there is a strictness about keeping Sunday here, which is quite different from what you are accustomed to observe in London. I have no objection to furnishing the dinner, but it must be understood that there shall be no rioting nor noise which shall annoy or attract the notice of other guests in the house." They assented, and the dinner was served. Every thing went on quietly for some time, until

the wine had circulated freely, and then their promise was forgotten, and noisy songs and boisterous proceedings commenced. Mr. Niblo entered the room to remind them of their promise, and request them to desist. They were not in condition to take any interference kindly, and Niblo was not in a mood to retreat. He ordered them to go, but as they were ten to one, they laughed at him. There was a good soft coal fire burning in the grate, and a good-sized poker *happened* to be lying with the bent end in the fire and red-hot. Niblo seized the formidable weapon and rushed upon his refractory guests with such vigor that the room was cleared without delay ; nor did they " stand upon the order " of their going, but *went* at once ! The following day they returned, some of them bearing evident marks of the encounter, and

apologized for breaking their promise, and begged to be reinstated in the good graces of the house.

From the Bank Coffee House, Niblo removed to the site now occupied by the Metropolitan Hotel and Niblo's Garden. It was then a part of the Van Rensselaar estate, known as the Bayard Farm. The ground had been occupied as a circus arena, and on the Crosby Street side was a large, low building, known as the Stadium. This was rejuvenated, arranged with ample corridors, and the auditorium was conveniently fitted up with a stage and accessories for concerts and light entertainments. Two large and commodious dwellings appeared, fronting on Broadway, one of which was occupied by Mr. Niblo, and the other by James Fenimore Cooper, the novelist. Opposite these houses, on the west side of Broadway, at the corner of Prince

Street, was the residence of John Jacob Astor. In the rear of the Niblo and Cooper residences, between them and Crosby Street, and extending down to Prince Street, was a large open space, which was beautifully laid out as a garden. It was ornamented with trees, shrubbery, and flowers, and the whole space was conveniently intersected by walks, and dotted with arbors, in which were seats and tables for serving light refreshments. The building was known as "Niblo's Saloon," and the open space as Niblo's Garden, and they at once became favorite places of resort.

On Monday, May 18, 1829, the "Saloon" was formally opened as a place of amusement by a grand concert called the "New York Musical Festival." It was under the general direction of the favorite singer, Charles E. Horn, and I remember

preparing the programme. It was quite a pamphlet, and besides the usual programme contained all the words of the vocal part of the concert. Upon the cover, as patrons of the affair, appeared the names of many well-known citizens of New York, amongst which were those of the Hon. S. Van Rensselaar, John Jacob Astor, Esq., Nathaniel Prime, Esq., John and Philip Hone, Charles King, John Delafield, and many others. William Taylor led the orchestra, and the performers, instrumental and vocal, numbered altogether over two hundred persons. The first part of the programme was sacred, being selections from the oratorio of the "Messiah." The second part was classical, and the third part was miscellaneous. It was a grand event for those times, and was a decided success. It immediately gave prominence to

Niblo's Saloon as a first-class concert place.

Prince Street was at that time very far up-town, and a great need was felt for some more regular and cheap conveyance to the new and popular place of amusement. To supply this need Mr. Niblo established a line of stages running at regular intervals between the old Washington Hotel, opposite Bowling Green, and the "Garden" at Broadway and Prince Street, carrying passengers at a shilling ( $12\frac{1}{2}$  cents) a head.

This, notwithstanding the controversy occasionally indulged in upon the subject, may safely be set down as the *first* line of stages started in New York.

Niblo very soon sold out the line at a good profit, and others were soon afterwards established. It may also be mentioned here that the first public baths in New York were those



established at the Battery by Mr. Niblo.

The next important change at the "Garden" was the appearance of the "Summer Theatre." It was a large, plain sort of a building, fronting on Broadway, above the two residences already mentioned, and extending well back toward Crosby Street. It was, for those times, elaborately fitted up with mirrors and colored lights, and ornamented with pots of flowers and ferns. It at once became the fashionable place of amusement, and the garden, as a fresh breathing-place, with its shrubbery, flowers, arbors, and ice-cream, long remained a great attraction.

The bar and lunch-counters were together in a separate building opening both toward the theatre and toward the garden. The times of old-fashioned hospitality had not yet quite passed away, and on many

an evening, or after some fatiguing rehearsal, a few members of the band or favorites of the company would find a comforting snack awaiting them. Old Dimulda (spelling?), the wine-merchant, was frequently on hand. "Why, bless my soul!" the old man would say, in his foreign way, "I had altogether forgotten it, but it is my birthday; bring me half a dozen of wine." And his birthday not uncommonly occurred two or three times a week. I recollect a little episode there one evening which caused some excitement at the time. A gentleman, now a prominent banker, was speaking lightly of a certain lady who was the subject of conversation, when another gentleman took exception to the remark, and slapped the speaker's face. A challenge, a duel in Maryland, a wounded and shortened limb, a reconciliation, and, I

believe, years of friendship, all followed the little incident and sensation in Niblo's Garden, in August, 1841.

The Summer Theatre continued a most favorite place of amusement for many years. Under Sefton's management a vaudeville company produced a succession of bright musical farces, amongst which were "Chaste Salute," "More Frightened than Hurt," "Promotion of the General's Hat," and others. The Ravels, the Seguins, Burton in "Toodles" and "Paul Pry," Placide, E. L. Davenport, John Brougham, and other noted actors and singers appeared, until the theatre was destroyed by fire in September, 1846.

Speaking of Burton—his old theatre in Chambers Street was long the home of the comic muse, and especially of comedy and farce, as represented by his own acting. In

addition to the mirth-provoking element in his representations, he also possessed the qualities of a wit and a practical joker.

One night at his own theatre, in addition to the usual play, there was on the bill an afterpiece, entitled "A House for Sale," in which Mr. Burton would take the principal rôle. There seemed to be an unusually long wait before the curtain went up for the afterpiece, and some of the audience became impatient; one man especially, in one of the front rows of the pit, near the orchestra, evidently a countryman, became particularly emphatic and noisy in his demonstrations of disapproval. Some conservative near by mildly suggested that he should keep quiet and save his boots. This, however, only increased the countryman's wrath and clamor. Then commenced opposing cries of "Shut him up!"

“Put him out!” and, on the other hand, “Let him alone!” “He’s right!” “It’s an outrage!” The whole house began to get interested and to take sides, some shouting “Police!” “Take him out!” and others, “He’s right!” “Let him alone!” In the meantime, a policeman walked rapidly down the aisle, and after an exciting tussle, the countryman was arrested and led out amidst excited and mingled cheers and cries of “Shame! Shame!”

A moment later the curtain was rung up, and on the stage stood the policeman still holding the countryman by the collar. They bowed to the audience, and the countryman, now evidently Burton, remarked that the House was *Sold!*

The new theatre was not opened until 1849.

September 27, 1855, should be

specially noted in the history of American music, though it has not been noticed at all by the historian of "Opera in New York." On that evening there was produced at Niblo's Garden an entirely new and original opera, upon an American subject and by an American composer. The opera was entitled *Rip Van Winkle*. The libretto was arranged by J. H. Wainright, from Washington Irving's sketch of that name ; the composer was Mr. George F. Bristow, and it was brought out by the Pyne and Harrison Opera Company. The music was bright and taking, though perhaps not always in perfect keeping with the quaint and old-time subject, and the orchestration was excellent. Mr. Stretton took the title rôle, and Miss Louisa Pyne, a charming English prima donna, bright, pleasing, and artistically excellent, sang the

part of the daughter *Alice*. The opera was beautifully put upon the stage, was received with enthusiasm, and had a most successful run.

In 1858, his lease having expired, Niblo retired from theatrical management and business generally, and lived quietly, indulging his benevolent impulses and his taste for art.

Niblo took a particular liking for the talented writer and popular actor, Tyrone Power. At the end of his Park Theatre engagement, Power was to return to England to fill an engagement in London. Niblo was also about to visit Europe, and his wife urged that they should cross together, thus making a more agreeable trip for both. Mr. Niblo, however, strangely it then seemed, was opposed to the plan, and in answer to his wife's frequent recurrence to the subject, replied: "Why, Martha, the steamer "President" has twice,

on other trips, run short of coal, and, all things considered, I prefer to go by a Cunarder ; perhaps even then I may arrive before Tyrone." And so in fact he did. Poor Power never played his London engagement, nor was the ill-fated "President," after leaving New York, ever heard from again.

Mr. Niblo died, August 21, 1878, when he was eighty-eight years old.

His wife, a woman of great practical ability and his most valuable and valued assistant in his undertakings, died several years before him.

During the last years of his life, a table with a bell upon it was always placed at his bedside, so that he might be able to summon assistance in case of need. One night, having left his bed and gone a few steps away, he suddenly fell powerless and speechless, and was for some time unable to call for aid. At length he



managed to crawl to the table, and seizing the cover pulled it off, carrying the bell along with it. The sound quickly brought his faithful attendant. As she entered he called out indistinctly but with his accustomed vein of drollery: "Ah, Mary—floored at last!"

It proved to be a stroke of paralysis, from which he never recovered.

## XXIX.

### *"Finale."*

Numerous are the names which come to mind of those still living, but connected by some special association with times gone by, who have attained distinction in one or another of the departments of the drama and lent some new charm to their art. John Gilbert, the Nestor of the profession, still remains, and though for half a century he has been "Old Gil," he is still the possessor of a brighter eye and a younger heart than many a man who has seen but half his years and done but a tithe of his painstaking and admirable work. Then there is Davidge, the grim and mirth-provoking vet-

eran ; Lester Wallack, who has done so much for the legitimate drama, ornamenting at the same time with his person and his acting the stage which artistically he has so much improved ; and Edwin Booth, distinguished son of a distinguished father, who has done for tragedy a like service to that which Wallack has accomplished for the lighter drama ; and who, by his representations, always scholarly and admirable, and, when the occasion offers, soul-stirring also and grand, has reflected honor upon his country and his art both at home and abroad.

Lately, in the person of Mr. Henry Irving, there has come to us from across the water another master in dramatic art ; one remarkable alike in his personality and dramatic power, but remarkable most of all for that fine dramatic instinct, cultivated taste, and never flagging in-

dustry and energy, which, aided by that brilliant and most admirable artist, Miss Ellen Terry, and a company of exceptional excellence, have led to the most correct, complete, and beautiful representations that have ever been presented to American audiences.

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